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A R I O U S P I E C E S

I N

VERSE AND PROSE.

BY THE LATE

NATHANIEL COTTON, M.D.

ANY OF WHICH WERE NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

Vitæ sanctitas summa, cōstitas pax. Infectatur vitia, non
homines. PLIN. EP. x.

Edendum autem ex parvis parvis—maiora quod libelli,
quos emisit, dicuntur in hauribus esse, quamvis jam
gratiam novitatis exuerint. PLIN. EP. ii.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MIRZA

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MIRZA TO SELIM.

He takes notice of the death of an eminent rabbi, mentioning some odd circumstances attending his preceding illness—expatiates in praise of Solomon's wisdom—inquires where the soul of the departed rabbi is lodged—and concludes with an exhortation to friendship in the region of the invisibles,

THE rabbi whose indisposition I made mention of in my last, is no longer a tenant of mortality. He commenced an immortal on the tenth of the present moon, about the fifth watch in the morning. But the arrest by the hand of the grim monarch was not sudden. For on the second day of the preceding week the angel of the grave intimated his intended approach, by commissioning the gout to attack him in the disguise of an apoplexy; which conveyed him into

2 MIRZA TO SELIM.

the cold embrace of the king of terrors, who peaceably ushered him into the region of the invibles.

Though his departure was expected, and his transition easy, there were nevertheless some circumstances which rendered his removal surprising to his surviving friends.

He had been confined to his chamber with a slight pain and swelling of his ancles near three weeks, which symptoms were so much abated on the 28th of the last moon, that he came down into his parlour on that day, and cheerfully acknowledged a superiority of health to what he had enjoyed for some years. His evening repast was accompanied with two or three of his acquaintances, who observed him to be remarkably facetious, and congratulated him on the improvement of his spirits. But scarcely were they arrived at their respective homes, ere a messenger followed with the lamentable news of the doctor's illness. There is also an occurrence, which I must not omit to mention, because it hath furnished speculation to many of this place, and perhaps may do the same to thee, if thou be fond of strange narratives, and thy mind have a tendency to credulity.

It is given out, that this ecclesiastic was a prophet, as well as a priest. These two characters,

thou knowest, were often blended together in the priesthood of the circumcised sons of Jacob. But late times furnish few instances of the province of priest and seer centering in one and the same person. Our friend, amidst the reveries of a distempered imagination, frequently interrogated those that stood about his couch, "who was to succeed him in his fortune?" they replied, that he was the properest person to appoint his successor; but that they imagined the relation and fondness, which he bore to his brother, would probably induce him to transfer his property to so near a relation. To all which the dying man answered, that such were his intentions, but his poor brother would not long enjoy the inheritance; confirming his sentiments and concern with a pathetic shake of his head.

The dissolution of our friends, and the mortality which awaits ourselves, are apt to fill our minds with grief and anxiety. To reconcile us to the loss of our acquaintances, and to our own decease, what volumes have been composed! It is the fond theme of the school-boy, and the sermon of the aged prelate! But of all the treatises which I have seen upon this subject, none gives me more satisfaction than the oriental fragments of a prince, who once sat upon the throne of Israel. The Hebrews boast aloud of this learned monarch;

4 MIRZA TO SELIM.

and truly several remnants of this Jewish king's writings, that are handed down to us, afford a just occasion to believe what we are told of Solomon's wisdom; for so they named their favourite prince.

Nor perhaps is there any circumstance, that tends to raise in our minds a greater idea of his understanding, than the first step, which he took to secure himself upon his father's throne. His parent and predecessor was called to the government from pursuing the meanest occupation; (for the history says, that he followed his father's flocks upon the mountains) and at a green age, before his beard had ratified his manhood. Under these disadvantages of obscure birth, and unexperienced life, he was set over a numerous people eminently factious, and given to change. His reign, as might well be expected, was a perpetuated struggle with difficulties and distress. After many years he died, having nominated, a little before his death, this son, of a late marriage, to succeed to the sceptre of Jerusalem; although he had at the same time other sons, who were the offspring of his former wives. Solomon, however, seemingly by the artifice of his mother, but more properly by the immediate will of Heaven, ascended the throne in spite of the attempts of his brothers to forestall him.

Being

Being thus invested with royal power, the prudent youth bethought himself, that the circumstances of his birth, and the turbulent disposition of his subjects would not fail to inspire the people with a contempt of their young monarch, and with measures to dethrone this junior issue of their late king. Under these difficulties the royal boy prostrated himself before the Almighty; and, forbearing to ask for power, grandeur, and riches (which a man would have imagined to be the prevailing passion of a young mind) he only solicited wisdom. The story adds, that his petition was so exceeding pleasing to God, that it was immediately complied with; and all other desirable appertenances were annexed.

Thou wilt excuse this digression, because it was necessary, in order to give thee a just idea of the prudence of the stripling, and to incline thee to think the more favourably of the traditionary maxims and aphorisms of his advanced years. This wise prince hath every where in his writings inculcated upon the minds of men a sense of the transient nature of all sublunary enjoyments, and of our mortality. So that according to his reasoning, it is the part of wisdom for every man to consider himself as a passenger, and his house as a caravanfara; to look upon gilded palaces and beautiful fields with all the indifference of a traveller,

6 MIRZA TO SELIM.

veller, whose possession at best is but a loan of short duration ; for if they are not taken away from him, he must speedily pass away from them, and make room for the next comer.

But declining the prosecution of a common theme, let thou and I ask ourselves, where the mind of our deceased friend is migrated ? O ! for some courteous angel to tell us this great secret ! to instruct us in the provinces assigned to disembodied spirits ! Do they sleep till the resurrection ? and if so, where are their dormitories ? Or if they are exempted from the slumbers of the grave, where do they exert their active faculties ? or where are the repositories of these wonderful intelligences ?

But these problems are never to be unriddled by mortals ! An impenetrable cloud resteth upon these mysterious subjects ! Wherefore let our thoughts be rather employed upon themes whose knowledge we can better ascertain. Let the death of our friends reconcile us to the view of our own sepulchres ; and since the decree is unavoidable, let us regard life, in the light in which the ancients looked upon it, as a feast ; and let us depart from table with the satisfaction and cheerfulness of a convivasatur, of a guest pleased with his entertainment, and thankful for the comforts of it. Or else let us look upon the world as a theatre,

atre, when a few years hence it will import us nought, which of us personated a statesman, and which of us an inferior character.

But although I have hinted, that there is little on this globe to deserve our fondness, I would nevertheless wish thee to love me as much as thou canst, and to rest assured, after all, that thou art not my creditor. And whosoever's lot it shall be to quit the stage first, let him preserve his former tenderness for the survivor. Let him maintain his integrity and friendship in a separate state; and if he be indulged the liberty of choosing his own province, be it that of a guardian angel to his friend below, to lead him gently through the meanders and difficulties of life, and to wait upon the confines of the two worlds to receive and welcome the social spirit, when dislodged hence. Nor entertain one doubt, that we shall be at a loss to find out each other. For congenial souls know their mates by intellectual intuition, and scorn the mediation of sensible organs for the discovery of one another.

Dated the eleventh of the tenth moon
of the Christian hegira, 1743.

MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA,

A LEARNED DERVISE.

He discourses on the happiness of good men, the intricacy of Providence—inquires into the rise and reasons of moral and natural evil—accounts for both on the hypothesis of a future state of retribution—vilifies the pride of man, and makes mention of his Maker in the strongest phraseology of the Orientals—concludes with an exhortation to patience and acquiescence.

VENERABLE dervise! thou illustrious missionary and legate of Allah! may peace with its downy pinions hover around thy dwelling.

Wilt thou permit a sheep of thy fold to approach thy sacred recess, and salute the hem of thy vestment?

I am perplexed with doubts and difficulties, and come to thee for a solution. Dissipate the mists and fogs of ignorance, that involve my understanding; illuminate my benighted mind, and purge
my

MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA. 9

my intellectual optics, that I may clearly discern the ways of Heaven.

To whom should I apply but to thee, faithful and vigilant shepherd, the oracle of thy district, and the lantern of thy flock? Thou that dispensest the celestial manna with unremitting constancy, oh! satisfy the cravings of a soul, that hungereth and thirsteth after thy instructions.

A Hebrew sultan hath asserted, "that a good man shall be satisfied from himself;" and when thou wast expatiating upon this hallowed aphorism, I verily knew that thou wast speaking experimentally.

Yes, thou treasury of all erudition and virtue! I can believe whatever thou tellest me of the good man. I believe that his soul receiveth pleasure from a thousand avenues. That the spirit of unerring wisdom taketh up his lodging in his breast, and diffuseth a divine serenity and peace. Like a familiar friend, this spirit suppleth with him, and not only partaketh of his meals, but shareth his couch also. Say, happy and sage dervise, for surely thou canst tell this important truth, are any joys wanting, where the bosom is occupied by this heavenly guest? Is not every thought an unison with the suggestions of this illustrious visitant? The harmony of instruments is but a faint resemblance

10 MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA.

blance of the harmony of the worthy mind. O ! the midnight music of such a favourite of Allah ! nearly akin to the songs of angels, and the golden harps of seraphs !

But tell me, thou guardian of thy sheepfold, is the calm of the good man permanent, and uninterrupted ? Doth no doubt about Providence spring up sometimes, and ruffle the smooth expanse of his breast ? or, like a sullen cloud, shoot athwart the sky, and deform the peaceful azure ? Surely not, for purified spirits are as clear of doubts as of guilt. It is the gross and terrene soul, that liveth in such troubled regions. I feel these incumbrances of polluted clay, which sink me down, whenever I attempt to wade the mighty gulph.

Mysterious Providence ! an abyfs without a bottom ! a sea without a shore ! at best it is such to the common understanding of humanity, not defecated from the dregs of vice and folly. O ! that some courteous inhabitant of the bright empyrean would descend from his high abode, and unveil to us these inexplicable arcana ! Or are we to remain in darkness, till we are ejected these tabernacles of flesh, and become denizens of the fields of light ? These bodies of ours are brittle mansions, obnoxious to destruction from violence.

But

MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA. 11

But if they escape forcible contingencies, such is the perishable nature of their composition, that after threescore years and ten they are seldom tenantable. And who would wish for a more durable building, since obscurity, impenetrable obscurity, resteth upon these earthly cottages? A wise man, methinks, would welcome that blissful period, which breaks down these partition-walls, whereby we are so long immured in flesh and sense.

But to resume the subject of my scruples, for I will tell thee all, that thou mayest conduct me out of this labyrinth of ambiguities, and lead me to the decisions of eternal sapience.

Instruct me, I beseech thee, from what corrupted source arose moral evil. Thou art well versed in the schools of disputation; explain therefore to me this problem of intricacy. Some of the Eastern philosophers, and particularly one of the Persian magi, have adopted into their system two principles, the one good, the other evil; and from the existence of Arimanius they deduce a solution of these difficulties. But how came this wicked dæmon to exist, and from what cause did he proceed? To say that he is co-eternal with almighty Allah is absurdity and blasphemy. To affirm he is of later birth, is seemingly to question the power
and

12 MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA.

and goodness of the Most High, in his thus permitting the existence of a dæmon.

But perhaps thou wilt say, that a freedom of will implies a capacity to do good or ill; that without the permission of moral evil, there can be no virtue. I ask thee, whether such steadiness in rectitude, as precludes every tendency of deviating into obliquity and error, is not preferable to virtue? Is not a Being good by necessity, superior to a Being good without the obligation or force of such necessity? Are not the angels, for instance, perfectly good, because they are utter strangers to iniquity and folly, and above all possibility of moral defilement? Perhaps thou wilt reply, that sublunary worlds are only the theatres of evil, because they are probationary states; and that the world above is the reward and consummation of virtue. But if the inhabitants of heaven are, or were not probationers formerly, how dost thou explain the history of the lapsed angels!

Alas! I am already launched out into an ocean of difficulties, and my fluctuating skiff must suffer wreck, unless thou kindly takest the steerage, and pilotest me into port.

Shall I speak my sentiments of what the schoolmen call natural evil? I have read their solutions, and verily I am scandalized at the poverty of their arguments. One, with an affected insensibility, denies

nies pain to be an evil. Another tells me, that reasoning is an infallible antidote to counteract, and remove the ills of affliction. Pitiful sophists indeed ! For if this doctrine was true, men of smaller capacities, who could not reason at all, or reason well, must be superlatively miserable. A third tells me, that grief is an idle passion, because it cannot call back my departed friend, whose loss, perhaps, I am deploring. But is not this inability a very good reason why I should weep ? A fourth would hush my complaints by telling me that such are the laws of the drama that we cannot all be heroes and kings. But surely I have a reasonable objection to the tragedy, when I am ordained the suffering party. A fifth, in a more modern strain assures me; that the world is a beautiful picture, where contrasts are required to compleat the beauty of the whole. But what comfort can this argument administer to me, who am appointed the contrast or dark shade in the piece ? Mere sophistry ! Collusion all ! It is only the doctrine of a future retribution that can thoroughly reconcile these weighty difficulties.

I know that an ancient and inspired missionary hath resolved a question of this kind into the sovereignty of the divine will. But some are of opinion, that when he likens the Creator to the potter, and man to the passive clay, the apostolic doctor
is

14 MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA.

is speaking of collective bodies of men, and not of any particular individual. For otherwise, this awful doctrine of the sovereignty of Allah rather silences, than satisfies the inquiring mind.—Alas ! what is man ! Is he not a poor, ignorant, and insufficient animalcule ? and when weighed in the scales of justice, less than nothing, and altogether vanity ?

And what is that transcendent Being, whose conduct this reptile so frequently and so impiously arraigns ? is he not elevated far above the highest conception of men and angels ? is he not of that exalted and sublimated purity, that his very ministers, who attend nearest his throne, cherubims of the highest rank and primogeniture ! are all maculated essences in his sight ? while Michael, Gabriel, and Ithuriel, illustrious seraphs ! are compelled to hide their faces with dilated pinions, being unable to abide the coruscations of his effulgent majesty !—Father of sempiternal ages ! Parent of light and life ! Uncreated, unoriginated beauty ! Bright exemplar of all that is fair and lovely ! Inexhaustible source of all that is wise, great, and good !

Here the soul, conscious of its own nothingness, shrinks back upon itself, and shudders at its criminal curiosity. My spirit faints within me, oppressed with the mighty idea of the godhead.

Veiling

Veiling my head in the folds of my garment, I fall prostrate and adoring, crying out with the most fervent emotions, "Just and true are thy ways, thou peerless majesty of ineffable glory!"

Doubtless the Supreme Being is the best of beings; and, although his ways are not to be comprehended by mortals, yet most assuredly they never swerve from the severest rules of absolute rectitude. I believe thou wilt advise the doubting mind to repose itself upon this unerring proposition, and be still. Such an admonition most certainly favours of wisdom; for why should the sons of men attempt to search into the inscrutables of the Almighty, and disquiet themselves in vain? Teach the restless mind the art of content, and then all surmises, doubts, and conjectures, will vanish into air, and the soul will rest satisfied with the dispensations of Heaven.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. It is pride, accompanied with ignorance, that makes a sceptic; humility and self-knowledge produce resignation and happiness.

May thou and I possess the silent joys of acquiescence. This resigned frame will act like a sovereign opiate; and hush to sleep every inordinate and turbulent passion.

Nor can Gilead boast a superior balsam for the wounds of affliction. If we are planted in the
shade,

16 MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA.

shade, may we flourish in the shade ! Some plants thrive best in situations of obscurity seldom visited by the sun. Who knows, but that such a retired culture is requisite to our being transplanted hereafter into the garden of Eden. Be it so—and let us possess our souls in patience and thankfulness here, that when the angel of the grave shall remove us hence, he may safely dispose of us near the rivers of Paradise, where, like the tree of life, we shall blossom and fructify abundantly, and our leaves never fade.

In the mean time let us solace ourselves with the hopes of this happy period. For surely it imports us little, although our way be strewn with weeds and brambles, provided it terminates in the walks and alleys of the garden of God. The world is a wilderness, and we are not to expect smooth roads, and commodious caravansaries.

The pointed briar shoots its luxuriant branches across the path, and wounds all passengers indiscriminately. Remember that the monarch is as little exempted from this common lot of humanity, as the meanest vassal.

Adieu, sage dervise, and since we cannot be more than men, we will not make ourselves less. But like the nightingale we will be cheerful and pleased, even with the thorn at our breast. This allusion, thou knowest, is to a fabulous tradition
among

MIRZA TO HEBATOLLA. 17

among the naturalists, who report, that this bird
reposes his breast évery night against a thorn, to
render him wakeful to sing.

Dated the twelfth of the
eighth moon, 1744.

18 MUSCULUS'S LETTERS.

L E T T E R I.

Dear Sister,

I Have events of the highest importance to communicate to you ! such as will quicken every tender and affectionate sensation, intermingle terror with joy, and at the same time inspire you with gratitude for the escape and recovery of your afflicted and indulgent brother.

But do not think that the following detail of my fears and sufferings is intended merely to excite your pity and concern. No, my dear, it is more immediately designed to put you upon your guard, that so you may avoid the wicked artifices of the cruel. And, oh ! I have a thousand cares and anxieties for your security and welfare.

Last night, when I had stepped a few paces from my house, I discovered the most surprising and hideous creature in the whole scale of beings. His size was enormous, far beyond the conception of thy unexperienced mind. I scarcely think, that an entire army of our species, if blended into one general mass, would amount to the quantity of matter which was contained in this monster. But his magnitude, however gigantic, was the least formidable circumstance attending him. Instead of eyes, there appeared to me two flaming furnaces,

MUSCULUS'S LETTERS. 19

naces, which, by their situation under the irregular arch which constituted his forehead, were certainly the optics of this most amazing savage. When he opened his mouth, I thought I should have swooned away. Language is too faint to express the terrors of his jaws, or the multitude of my fears. When his mouth was extended, I descried a cavern of immeasurable depth, and the lining of this cavern was the colour of scarlet. His tongue was indisputably wider than my whole body; and his teeth were as long and as large as my thigh-bones. His bulk, as I have already intimated, was large even to astonishment; and he dragged behind him a tail answerable in length and thickness to a cable. His four legs were like four huge massy pillars, and his feet terminated in sundry frightful claws, each resembling, in their curvature, a Turkish cimeter reversed.

I viewed this monster with horror and dismay. But what do you think were my feelings, when I beheld him making insidious advances towards me? No sooner had he approached within a few yards of me, than he couched to the ground, and erecting his bushy tail, he waved it to and fro with amazing ease and freedom, considering its stupendous weight. His eyes, methought, flashed flakes of fire. But perceiving him to gain upon me, I hastened with precipitation into my subterraneous

20 MUSCULUS'S LETTER 9.

manſion. The very moment that I made my retreat, the ſavage gave a bound, and came like thunder upon the roof of my caſtle. I was ſo much ſhocked at theſe occurrences, that I fell into fits, and kept my bed for ſeveral days. Proportionably as my fears abated, ſo my health returned. But this recovery was the occaſion of future evils, the melancholy hiſtory whereof ſhall be reſerved for my next letter.

In the mean while, I beg you to arm your breaſt with fortitude; for the account of my further dangers and diſtreſs will otherwiſe overpower your ſpirits. Indeed my ſtory is ſo very affecting, that there will be required greater firmneſs of mind than what uſually falls to a female's ſhare, to hear the bare relation of my ſorrows without diſſolving into tears.

I am, dear Siſter,
Your moſt affectionate Brother,
MUSCULUS.

LETTER II.

WELL, my deareſt Muſcilla, I hope my former letter was received with all that tenderneſs, which was due to me and my afflictions. But I hope too, that my ſufferings have
not

not made injurious impressions upon your health. For, to inflict a lasting wound, or even to occasion my dear sister vapours and melancholy, would render me the most miserable of our species. If my sorrows are superior to those of others, so is my love to thee, thou brightest ornament of thy sex. But to proceed in my narrative.

After that I was a little recovered, and was picking up my crumbs (as it is called) I began to consult my appetite, and thought that my stomach seemed disposed to a delicate piece of Parmesan. Accordingly, I stole out privately, one moon-light night, to a neighbouring cheesemonger's, where I had formerly made many plentiful meals. As I was surveying with vast satisfaction the variety and dainties of the shop, I discovered upon the counter a strange kind of building. I question whether its name is to be found in any of the ancient or modern books of architecture. It was formed after the model of a rotunda, and consisted of an infinite number of iron bars closely set together, and all running parallel to the horizon; with a few perpendicular columns that sustained and connected together these circular bars. The gate, or rather the opening, was placed in the summit. A very awkward entrance, you'll say; and believe me, a very dangerous one too, as I found afterwards by

22 MUSCULUS'S LETTERS.

woful experience. From this aperture I faw a large quantity of meal lying loofe on the floor of the building; which circumftance led me to think, that it was intended for a granary or ftorehoufe. As I had already gratified the cravings of my appetite, I chofe to postpone the treasures of this magazine for a future banquet; for I am (as my dear fiftter well knows) an utter enemy to the voluptuary and glutton. A few nights afterwards I repeated my vifit to the cheefemonger's, and, fpringing upon the counter, I had a full view of the iron meal-houfe. My ftomach at that period being delicate, and my digeftion fomewhat impaired by the richnefs of the Parmefan, I judged it prudent to vary my diet; and therefore determined to regale myfelf with the contents of that curious repository which I have juft now defcribed.

In purfuance of this refolution, I fcaled the wall of the building, and entering at the opening in the fummit, I defcended with eafe to the bottom, where I fupped with moderation and contentment. After fome time, I began to think of retiring to my own home. But judge of my confternation, when I caft my eyes upwards, and found my retreat precluded by a hundred fwords pointing towards me.

In

In order to explain this mystery, it will be necessary that I expatiate more largely on the construction of the edifice.

The aperture at the top was formed after this manner. There was a large iron hoop, the center as it were of all the circular and perpendicular bars already described. From this hoop proceeded a vast number of strait pikes, with their extremities tending downwards and terminating at a considerable distance from the floor. As they advanced downwards they likewise kept advancing nearer to each other, in this respect resembling the termination of a funnel; leaving space sufficient for my entrance. But by the description now given, you will readily conceive, that the points of these pikes, like the points of so many swords, prevented my egress from this prison. I was now too sensible of my error, condemned my curiosity, and gave myself up for lost. And oh! what a night of horrors did I pass! But indeed far greater horrors were still in reserve for me. In the morning, when the master of the shop had discovered his prisoner, he called a council of his house; and they, without hearing what I had to say in my defence, unanimously adjudged me guilty of felony, and sentenced me to death. You will easily imagine the excessive perturbation of my spirits, when I heard the irrevocable decree

24 MUSCULUS'S LETTERS.

passed upon me. But what a thousand additional terrors did I suffer, when I was acquainted with the manner of my execution ! In a few minutes the four-legged savage, mentioned formerly, was brought into the shop, and I was forthwith to be delivered into the paws of this merciless enemy. Accordingly my prison was lifted from the counter, when suddenly the treacherous floor gave way, and I fell into the claws of the monster. He caught me with such violence, that he drove two of his talons into my sides, and thereby fractured my ribs. He then cruelly sported with my agonies ; and thinking it was impossible that I could escape, he retired to a little distance from me, and smiled, or rather grinned with all the malignant complacency of a dæmon.

During this short interval, I had sense enough remaining to meditate flight. Presently I descried a breach in the wall of the shop, which breach was ample enough to admit me, and small enough to exclude my adversary. Whereupon I summoned up all the shattered remains of my strength and spirits, and with one effort happily gained that favourable sanctuary. Long I lay languishing with my wounds ; but in process of time my bones coalesced, my sores healed, and my strength returned.

I do

MUSCULUS'S LETTERS. 25

I do not doubt but that your tender and compassionate heart will bleed at this melancholy recital of my woes. Let your brother's misfortunes teach you this instructive and important lesson—that when we riot in plenty and security, then danger and death are at the door. Improve these hints, live, and be happy.

I am,

My dearest sister's

Most affectionate brother,

MUSCULUS.

March 20, 1750.

SERMONS.

S E R M O N S.

S E R M O N I.

E C C L E S I A S T E S,

C H A P. xii. to V E R S E 8.

V E R S E I. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*

IN the earlier part of thy life, think frequently upon thy Creator. Remember, that thou art indebted to him, not for thy existence only, but likewise for the continued preservation, and the various comforts of thy being. Be sure therefore to testify thy gratitude for such high obligations by consecrating the bloom and strength of thy youth to Almighty God. This is assuredly the period of thy most acceptable services. Wherefore do not postpone the discharge of religious duties to more advanced life; because at that period infirmities, pains, and sorrows shall imbitter the remainder of thy

thy days, and tender existence itself an almost insupportable burthen.

VERSE 2. *While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain.*

Consider further, that not only the body is enervated by age, but that the intellectual faculties, those luminaries of the microcosm, are likewise impaired. The understanding is darkened, the memory debilitated, and the active powers of the mind become cold, languid, and enfeebled; or perverse, restive, and reluctant to all the exercises of religion. The judgment is the light of man, it is that which irradiates, guides, and directs his steps. If this sun of the mental system is obscured by old age, how great is our darkness! and how incapable are we rendered hereby of all religious pursuits!

Let me add also, that besides these natural obstacles, arising from deficient powers both of body and mind, there are very many contingent impediments to our duty. I mean those outward troubles and afflictions which accompany human life in general, and which are usually multiplied in proportion to the number of years that a man sojourns upon earth. Hence it is that towards the close of our days, we find disappointments, griefs, and sor-

rows arise in a quick succession, like returning clouds in a wet season.

VERSE 3. *In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,*

But as the early surrender of our hearts to God, and the steady application of our minds to his service, is a matter of such vast consequence, it may not be amiss to examine with greater precision those particular lets and hindrances to our duty which are the effects of age. Now these impediments will appear evident, from a scrutiny into those evils which advanced years bring upon the human system.

Those hands, which should be frequently lifted up in prayer to God, being weakened by age, hang down and tremble, They are even disabled from earning provision for the body, or defending it against external injuries. At the same time the ribs, and the stronger bones of the thighs and legs, which once gave strength, rectitude, and stability to the whole fabric, and which, in conjunction with the back-bone, connected and held together the several parts of the edifice; these strong and mighty

mighty supports, I say, are all relaxed or bowed down by age, and foretell the approaching fall of the superstructure.

The teeth likewise, in advanced years, become disabled from discharging their office by a decay of their substance, or loss of their number. Hence the aliment is not properly broken, and divided, and prepared for the stomach. From which cause a multitude of ills arise to the system in general. For the food being imperfectly acted upon by the teeth, is also imperfectly acted upon afterwards by the stomach. Whence proceed indigestion, obstructions, and a default of nourishment through the various parts and members of the body.

The defect of vision is another concomitant evil of old age. The eyes, those valuable organs, so essentially necessary not only to the comforts and pleasures of life, but also to the security and preservation of man, are incapacitated by length of years from performing their important functions. Those windows of the building are darkened by films or defluxions; and the soul is, as it were, precluded from looking out at these obstructed casements. Whence it follows, that as from the decay of our strength we are disqualified for the active duties of religion, so from the diminution of our sight, we can make no fresh acquisitions to our knowledge by the writings of others; and
thereby

thereby cannot recal or quicken past ideas and notices of our duty.

VERSE 4. And the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low.

But to return once more to those instruments, which first prepare and dispose the food for its advantageous reception in the stomach. Because, since our very being depends upon the sustenance we receive, and its due distribution through all the parts of the body, we can easily infer that the entire loss or destruction of our teeth must cause a great diminution of strength and vigour to the whole system.

That old age deprives us of these smaller bones is too obvious a truth to be expatiated upon. And, besides the unhappy consequences already enumerated, an additional difficulty immediately presents itself to our view. The gums at this period are to personate the province of the teeth. But the smoothness of their surfaces renders them very unfit for this work. Hence what pains and labour are aged men obliged to take, before they can bruise and soften their food sufficiently for the purposes of the stomach. At the same time the lips, those portals of the mouth, are kept constantly
shut

but during the action of the jaws, lest the morsel, through loss of the teeth to withhold it, should be protruded and fall out.

Another melancholy effect of old age is a deficiency of sleep, whereby the strength and spirits are further impaired. The old man often awakens at the crowing of the cock, and is incapable of obtaining repeated slumbers. Whereas the child, or the man of middle age, can perpetuate his sleep almost at will.

Notice hath already been taken of defective vision. But the organs of hearing are likewise great sufferers by age. Those daughters of music, who, by their exquisite delicacy of sensation, and skill in melodious principles, formerly reduced sounds into harmony for the pleasure of themselves and others, are now brought into the lowest estate, and are no longer in a capacity of answering the ordinary purposes of their structure.

VERSE 5. *Also, when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.*

But however material and weighty all these evils may be, there is still a longer and heavier train

of calamities, which associate themselves with advanced years.

Whereas youth is bold, valiant, and regardless of danger, age is quite the reverse of this character. In every action the ancient man discovers diffidence, irresolution, and timidity. In all his short excursions abroad, he treads with wariness and distrust. After painful ascending an eminence, he is seized with a temporary giddiness; and in his return, he trembles at every pebble in the path; lest his strength prove insufficient for these trifling obstacles, and a fall ensue. Thus fears and terrors are attendants upon the steps of that man, whose grey hairs resemble the whitening blossoms of the almond-tree; and to whom, from the decline of his strength, even the grasshopper, that light and inconsiderable insect, becomes a burden. Add to all this, a disrelish of every scene around him, from the failure of desire, and the decay of his other passions. Yet all these inconveniences and ills are inseparable from humanity; because man is born to die, and age is the harbinger of death. To enforce this truth by argument, would be an insult offered to the understandings of men, while funerals and mourning relatives are frequently darkening the streets.

From what hath been already said upon the weakness, infirmities, and diseases of advanced
life,

life, the expediency as well as the duty of early religion must appear abundantly evident. However, as the human body is a complicated structure, and as little more than the external parts of the building have been considered at present, let us carry our researches further, and examine what is doing in the more private and retired chambers of this wonderful fabric.

VERSE 6. *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.*

Here we shall be astonished at the stupendous displays of Almighty wisdom, power, and goodness. Know then, that there are scattered up and down in the human body, and indeed in all animal bodies, a multitude of white cords, to which anatomists have given the appellation of nerves. These strings are the immediate instruments of sensation and motion. For if a nerve, which leads to any part, be tied hard, or cut asunder, that part to which this nerve belonged instantly loses all feeling, and becomes destitute of action.

From the brain, which is the source of the whole nervous system, there proceeds through the whole length of the back-bone, in a cavity curiously formed for its reception and security, a

cord of an enlarged size, which, on account of its resplendent whiteness, may aptly be compared to the complexion of burnished silver. From this cord arise thirty pairs of smaller strings, which are distributed along the arms, thighs, legs, and trunk of the body. Now in old age this silver cord is very liable to be relaxed and weakened, or a part thereof to be altogether broken in its functions ; as appears from those paralytic complaints to which elderly persons are peculiarly subject. When a relaxation of this cord prevails, then tremors are the consequence ; when the canals which compose this cord are quite obstructed, then follow complete palsies, or in other words, an entire deprivation of sense and motion. Ought we not therefore to remember our Creator in the prior stages of life, before this melancholy period of deficient sensation and action arrives ? for a palsy is partial death, and generally portends the speedy dissolution of the whole building.

But, agreeably to what hath already been suggested, the brain is the origin of the nerves. And those nerves which are bestowed upon the eyes, the ears, the tongue, and all the other parts of the face and head, issue immediately from the brain itself, through small holes in the scull, designed for the transmission of these little cords. Any disorder happening to these nerves, and interrupting

rupting their functions, will occasion, according to the degree of the disease, dimness of sight, or total loss of vision; heaviness of hearing, or absolute deafness; defective speech, or an utter incapacity of speaking; will deprive the lips in part or altogether of their due motions; and likewise impair or annihilate the smell and the taste.

What an amazing organ is the brain! that source and parent of all motion and sensation! that inexplicable repository of the understanding of man! How curious its texture, how tender its substance, and of what vast importance to the whole system! For which reason, the all-wise Creator hath securely lodged it in a strong citadel of bone, which, from its circular cavity, and the inestimable value of its treasures, may with propriety be styled the golden bowl.

Now, it is observable, that in the extremity of old age, this golden bowl, and more especially the contents thereof, are highly injured. The several parts of the brain, through length of time, become unfit for their various offices. It is like an exquisitely wrought machine with complicated movements; a long succession of years breaks, wears out, and dissolves this surprizing workmanship: wherefore, it must be the highest folly to defer the consideration of our eternal interests till the winter of life comes upon us, when we are

unqualified for the common intercourses of society, and even for the ordinary actions of animal life.

But additional motives for early religion will result from a scrutiny into the effects which age occasions to the heart, and to the great pipes that proceed from this fountain of life. We ought most assuredly to secure the favour of our Maker before these great canals, which issue from the heart, and receive (like pitchers at a well) the contents of this spring, grow incapable of discharging their office aright. For it is an incontestable truth, that in elderly men these grand conduits, which receive the blood from the heart, in order to circulate it through the lungs, the brain, and all the organs and members of the body, become bony, rigid, and inflexible; whereby they are disabled from acting upon the blood, and driving it through all the fine vessels of the system. Hence those languors, faintings, and sudden changes which are discoverable so frequently in persons much advanced in years.

But even the heart itself, that cistern of the whole building, which receives and dispenses to the most distant extremities in an appropriated period of time, every particle of blood belonging to the body; I say, this great reservoir is rendered by old age unfit for this important charge. Part of its substance, like the great canals already mentioned,
degenerate

degenerate into bony fibres, which are unable to perform their due action; for the heart propels the blood to the extreme parts by a contractile power. If this contractile force is abated by the hardness and inflexibility of the heart's substance, it is apparent that the circulation of the blood cannot be properly carried on; but momentary stagnations, sinkings of spirits, and universal weakness will follow; because this power of contraction, like the wheel of a water engine, is the grand and principal cause of the distribution of the fluid through all the numerous channels of the system.—This is a true, though uncomfortable representation of the animal œconomy in the decline of life; and whoever attentively surveys this picture, and acts answerably to the admonitions which it suggests, will be solicitous to acquaint themselves with God from their youth; they will dedicate themselves to their great Creator in the early stages of life; and by so doing may, towards the close of it, with a humble and reasonable confidence, hope that God will not desert them when they are become old and grey-headed.

Every serious and thinking man must be convinced, that the consecrating the prime of his days and the vigour of his strength to Heaven, is both wisdom and piety; for what can all his services avail him, under the corporeal imbecilities, mental failures, and the many incidental evils of extreme

age? To all procrastinating votaries will not the prophet's interrogatory be very apposite? "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts?"

VERSE 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God, who gave it.*

But it must be also noticed, that these deficiencies and decays of the system are the immediate forerunners of its dissolution; that when this great change befalls us, the materials of which our bodies are composed, shall be resolved into earth, from whence they were taken; and our souls, which animated these organiz'd particles of dust, shall return to God the father and judge of our spirits, who will reward or punish us according to our deeds in the flesh. This is an argument of infinite weight, and far superior to any hitherto urged for the remembering our Creator in the days of our youth: which advice, if we sedulously pursue, we shall have no suffering to fear, but every joy to hope for, "when God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

S E R M O N I I.

St. J O H N' S G O S P E L,

CHAP. xi. V E R S E S 25 and 26.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

TH E R E was at Bethany (a village within two miles of Jerusalem) a happy family, whom our Lord had honoured with distinguished marks of his affection and friendship. This family consisted of a brother and two sisters. Lazarus, which was the name of the brother, laboured under a distemper which threatened danger. His sisters Martha and Mary, being very anxious for his life, sent a messenger to Jesus, who was then in the country beyond Jordan, to acquaint him with the sickness of his friend Lazarus, and to entreat his personal assistance. When our Lord had received the intelligence, he declared to his disciples, that the distemper should not terminate in the final removal of Lazarus out of this world, but that his temporary decease should occasion an illustrious manifestation of the power of God, and at the

same time should incontestably prove the divine mission of the Messiah, the Son of God.

The Evangelist observes, that Jesus entertained a very affectionate regard for this amiable family. But, notwithstanding his kind attachment to Lazarus, it is said, that “ he abode two days still in the “ same place where he was.” St. John might design to intimate, that our Lord forbore to hasten to Bethany, because the great length of time which intervened between the death and resurrection of Lazarus, must preclude all possibility of doubt touching the fact of his decease; and also, that our Lord’s absence removed every suspicion of fraud and artifice, and furnished him with an opportunity of displaying his divine power in the raising of his friend from the dead.

At the expiration of two days, Jesus sat out for Bethany; and was no sooner come into the neighbourhood of the afflicted family, than the news of his approach reached Martha, who immediately hastened to meet him. Her sister Mary, unacquainted with our Lord’s arrival, sat weeping in the house with her mourning friends.

When Martha had found Jesus, she brake out into this plaintive exclamation of sorrow, “ Lord ! “ if THOU hadst been *here* my brother had *not* “ *died.*” Upon our reading this passionate expression of grief, we are naturally led to wonder, how
Martha,

Martha, who had been intimately acquainted with our Lord, his doctrines and miracles, could possibly imagine, that the actual presence of Jesus was necessary to save her brother from death.

Had she never heard of our Lord's recovery of the Centurion's servant ? or of the cure of the Nobleman's son at the distance of Cana from Capernaum ? Had she never received any information of his speaking the Ruler's daughter into life, or of the restoration of the Widow's son from the dead ? Or if it be urged, that Jesus was present when he rescued these two instances from the grave, can we suppose that Martha really believed his immediate presence to be more essentially necessary for the restoration of the dead, than for the recovery of the distant sick ? Perhaps a reflection upon the nature of excessive sorrow will furnish us with the most natural solution of these difficulties. It is usual for immoderate grief to chain the mind down to the particular object of its attention, and to preclude all due exertions of thought ; to vent its feelings in imperfect sentences, and in tender reproaches of friendship, and upon sudden conviction to recollect itself, and silence its own emotions. This appears to be the true case of Martha's sensations. She had with warmth insinuated to our Lord, that her brother's death was occasioned by the noncompliance of Jesus with the message she had sent him
of

of her brother's danger, and of her importunate desire of his speedy return to Bethany. But although she had told him, in the fullness of her heart, that if he had been there, her brother had not died ; yet she appears to have recovered her better sentiments, before she had finished her speech ; because she instantly subjoined, " I know, " that EVEN NOW, whatsoever thou wilt ask of " God, God will give it thee."

Some little difficulty attends this passage. Did Martha harbour any faint hopes, that Jesus would restore her brother to life again ? This expression of her faith seems to imply as much ; and yet the subsequent verses carry a different import. For when Jesus told her, that her brother should rise again, she acknowledged the truth of his divine assertion ; but she discovered no expectations of his resurrection prior to the general resurrection at the LAST DAY. And although our Lord had suggested to her strong intimations of an earlier resurrection ; yet, upon our Lord's approach to the grave of Lazarus, and commanding the stone which covered it to be removed, Martha is represented as the only person who remonstrated against so seemingly unnecessary an undertaking. And, as the reason of her objection, she urged the present putrefaction of her brother's body. What then could be her meaning, when she said, " But I

“ know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask
 “ of God, God will give it thee ?” Perhaps all
 this obscurity is likewise to be resolved into the
 passion of violent sorrow ; which oftentimes stands
 convicted, and nevertheless acts contrary to its
 own convictions.

Thus it is very common for a man under a
 severe affliction, to believe one minute, and the
 next disbelieve, any intelligence that makes for his
 comfort. These are the natural contrarieties of
 the human breast ; and, if properly attended to,
 will account for Martha’s conduct in the story
 before us. It is more than probable, that when
 Jesus told her, her brother should rise again, there
 presented to her mind some glimmering confused
 expectations of our Lord’s working some extraor-
 dinary miracle for the consolation of herself and her
 sister ; but that she could not conceive any expli-
 cit ideas of such comfort, is very evident from the
 verses I have already recited. She appears to be no
 ways apprised that our Lord, by any power inherent
 in HIM, COULD raise Lazarus from the dead. This
 mistake our Lord rectifies in the subsequent verse ;
 “ Jesus said unto her, *I* am the RESURRECTION
 “ and the LIFE ; he that believeth in me, though
 “ he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever
 “ liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.”
 That is, I am the author of the resurrection, and of
 the life subsequent to the resurrection : where-
 fore

fore I am capable of raising the dead at any period ANTECEDENT to the general resurrection. "He " that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet " shall he " come to life again, provided it be my will and pleasure to call him from the grave. " And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me," though by nature he is subjected to death, yet shall he not die, if I think proper to prevent him from dying. Believest thou this, Martha? Art thou thoroughly persuaded by this assertion of mine, that such an absolute plenitude of power resideth in me?

The usual explanation of this passage is as follows:—I am the author of the resurrection and giver of life. Faith in me shall occasion the dead to live hereafter, and such as live by faith shall not continue under the power of death.—Though these verses will admit of such a commentary, and indeed will admit of no other amongst us, since miracles have ceased; yet the preceding interpretation appears to be our Lord's precise meaning, when considered as a reply to what Martha had immediately said before: "I know that my brother shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." As she had actually declared her belief of the resurrection of her brother at the last day, there was no room for our Lord to add, after what he had said, "Believest thou this?" And that our Lord's words imported more than the resurrection

resurrection of Lazarus at the day of judgment, is very evident, both from the remonstrance of Jesus against the objection of Martha to removing the stone which covered the sepulchre, and from the very miracle itself of the resurrection of Lazarus. Martha had said that her brother's body was putrefied; but Jesus rejoined, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

The Evangelist informs us, that after Jesus had put the interrogatory to Martha, relative to his ability of raising her brother, she immediately replied in the affirmative, and acknowledged him to be the Messiah invested with Almighty power.

After this declaration of her faith and confidence in Jesus, she hastened to her sister Mary, and acquainted her that their divine Master was arrived, and was making tender enquiries after her; whereupon she arose up quickly, and went unto Jesus. But several of the Jews, suspecting that she was going to the grave to weep over her departed brother, immediately followed her, in order to calm the tumultuous agonies of her grief; by which means they became spectators and witnesses of the stupendous miracle which Jesus afterwards performed.

As soon as Mary was come into our Lord's presence, she prostrated herself at his feet, and with streaming

streaming eyes, said to him, as Martha had done before ; “ Lord, if THOU hadst been HERE, my “ BROTHER HAD NOT DIED.” The compassionate Jesus, moved by her tears, and by the sorrows of her associates, fetched deep sighs, and painfully sympathized with the afflicted mourners. He then interrogated them about the place where they had interred Lazarus ; they desired him to accompany them to the tomb of the deceased. Upon this occasion, he subjected himself to all the tender emotions of humanity, and wept greatly. Some of the Jews, who beheld his tears, could not refrain from noticing the strength of his affection for Lazarus ; while others reproached him with the want of power to prevent the death of his friend, and called into question the reality of the cure which he had performed upon the blind man during the feast of tabernacles. Jesus observing their wicked reflections, and obstinate incredulity, repeated his groans, as he was advancing to the sepulchre. It was a cave hewn in a rock, and a stone lay upon it. After he had commanded the stone to be withdrawn, and had addressed himself to his heavenly Father, in a prayer of thanksgiving for the Divine power committed unto him, he cried out with a loud and authoritative voice, “ Lazarus, come forth. And he “ that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot
“ with

with grave cloaths: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go."

To comprehend this miracle in its full force, it may be expedient to remark, that it was a custom with some of the eastern nations, before they desisted their dead in the sepulchre, to swathe the corpse in many rolls or linen bandages. After this manner was Lazarus wrapped when he was laid in his grave: wherefore, when Lazarus came forth, he did not come forward with a progressive motion, or as a man walketh; but he advanced like a statue, borne into the midst of the crowd by an invisible hand. For, had he stepped out of the tomb in the common method of human motion, there had been no occasion for our Lord to say, Loose him, and let him go." Besides, the unbelieving Jews would certainly have cavilled at such a manner of egress, and most probably would have thence taken an opportunity of saying, that Lazarus had concealed himself in the sepulchre to test our Lord's pretensions to miraculous power. Whereas the fact, taken in all its circumstances, places the death of Lazarus beyond the power of doubt. Jesus ordered him to be LOOSED, and thereby permitted him to return to his own family. As much as if our Lord had said, I will not rest the weight and credit of this miracle solely

ly upon the attestation of the **SIGHT** of the multitude; for this sense may be objected against as liable to imposition and deception. But do you, who are now present, receive the convictions arising from your **FEELING**. Apply your hands to the bandages, which so straitly infold the body and limbs of Lazarus, and then say, whether it be possible for him, under such ligatures and restrictions, to come forth from the grave without a divine interposition.

Having thus explained as much of this chapter as bears any immediate connection with my text, I shall now proceed to the improvement of those words of our blessed Lord, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.”

Agreeably to what I have already hinted, this passage, so far as it relates to us, is to be interpreted thus:—I am the author of the resurrection and the giver of eternal life. Faith in me shall occasion the dead to live hereafter; and whosoever liveth by faith shall not continue under the power of death.

First. This glorious doctrine of a happy futurity in the world to come, hath a natural tendency to adjust and regulate our estimate of the things of

this

this life. The man who looks upon himself as a candidate for immortality ; or, in the phrase of the apostle, the man, WHOSE CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN, cannot over-rate the honours, pleasures, and profits of this world. For were their real value far superior even to our most elevated notions thereof, yet the good man knows, that they are lighter than the dust upon the balance, when compared with the happiness of the celestial state. But in truth, the joys of this world are acknowledged, by those who abound most in them, to be disproportionate to the expectations of the possessors. If they be inferior in degree, and flow in succession, then they soon become insipid, and pall upon our sense. If they be of a tumultuous and riotous nature, then they exhaust our spirits, and leave an insupportable languor behind them. But besides the insufficiency and satiety of all sublunary comforts, the uncertainty of their continuance depreciates likewise their value. They are as unstable as the winds or the waves ; and therefore are destitute of that permanency which is necessary to constitute true happiness.

If these deficiencies be confessed, even by the voluptuary and the sensualist, in what a very derogatory light must the pleasures of this world appear to the exalted mind of a Christian, who is daily contrasting their emptiness, brevity, and instability,

with the plenitude, excellence, and eternity of those pleasures, which are "at the right hand of God!"

But, as the enlightened Christian can, of all men, alone ascertain the exact worth of terrestrial comforts, so it is he only who can properly enjoy them.

The thoughts of death must frequently interfere with the delights of that man who places his felicity in the things of this life. Agreeably to the judicious observation of the wise son of Sirach, "Oh death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man who lives at rest in his possessions; unto the man who hath nothing to vex him, and who hath prosperity in all things!" Upon men of this complexion, every memento of mortality will, in a greater or less degree, have the same effect, as the hand-writing on the wall had upon the Babylonian monarch, "whose countenance was changed, and whose thoughts troubled him; so that the joints of his loins were loosened, and his knees smote one against another."

Indeed it appears almost an impossibility for any of us to have the thorough taste and enjoyment of pleasures, which either may be taken away from us unexpectedly, or from which we may be unexpectedly removed. And reflections upon such precariousness of tenure will often crowd

crowd into our minds, notwithstanding our most solicitous endeavours to bar the door against them. We may be frequently shifting scenes, may fly from one amusement to another, and endeavour to lose ourselves amidst riot and dissipation; but remembrances of our mortality will often present themselves to our reluctant consciences, suggest the most mortifying lessons, and intermingle our cups with wormwood and gall.

Now, let us take a survey of the breast of that man, who looks upon this world only as a passage to a better—who knows, “that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, he hath a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”—who is perfectly satisfied of a glorious reversion hereafter, even of an inheritance among the saints in life, “uncorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Shall not such a man have a more undisturbed possession, and a truer relish of the good things of this world, than he who is sure of being taken away from them, sooner or later, and when this period happens, is likewise sure of being undone, having nothing to hope for beyond the grave. You will observe, that the fears of death must unavoidably spoil the pleasures of that person, whose expectations terminate with his mortal existence.

Whereas the sincere and pious Christian, who firmly believes a resurrection unto eternal life, hath nothing to fear from the hand of death, and therefore nothing to blunt the edge, or impair the relish of allowable pleasures. On the contrary, to such a person the word *dying* carries a gainful notion in it, importing delights infinitely preferable to all the joys of flesh and sense. But I shall proceed to a more important improvement.

Secondly. The well-grounded assurances of a blessed immortality are our best supports under every afflictive providence. Many and weighty are the calamities of this life; and miserable will that man be who flatters himself with an imaginary exemption from them; or who hath made no provision against the days of sorrow and extremity. Surprise and unpreparedness will quicken his sufferings, and render his afflictions additionally heavy. Philosophy hath framed a variety of schemes to sustain the soul under the pressures of adversity; but to every system we may with great propriety apply that emphatical passage of the prophet Isaiah: "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch
" himself on it, and the covering narrower than
" that he can wrap himself in it." The utmost that can be said of the very best of such systems is this, that they SILENCE rather than satisfy the human mind.

are there no other resources than those of
 why? no other comforts than what are
 out to us by the COLD hand of reason?
 then turn our eyes to religion, and ask
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 unds and bruises of affliction? Yes, the
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 the dispensations of Providence,

martyrology would have been scanty, and
 ave amounted to a glorious army, if the
 f a resurrection to immortal life had not
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 interest, but even cheerfully submitted to
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 its could sustain such fiery trials by the
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 enable us to possess our souls in patience
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 intermingled with comforts? Alas! what
 distresses which we undergo, compared
 ie sufferings of the primitive martyrs?
 oster, in his epistle to the Hebrews, assures

us, that the champions of religion “ had trials of
“ cruel mockings and scourging, bonds, and im-
“ prisonments ; that they wandered in deserts
“ and mountains, and in dens and caves of the
“ earth ; that they were even stoned, sawn asunder,
“ and slain with the sword.” Can the most af-
flicted of us all stand forth and say, that these cru-
elties are our portion ? Hath any calamity befall-
len us, but such as is common to man ? And
although it is very true that many of the afflictions
incident to humanity are very severe, and over-
matches for our strength, unassisted by religion, yet
they are greatly unequal to the sufferings of the
primitive Christians ; and therefore, if the hopes
of a future life and immortality are incapable of
supporting us under sorrows less painful and less
weighty, it is evident that the fault must lie at our
doors ; that such deficiency is not imputable to
the doctrine of the resurrection, but to the weak-
ness of our faith. Indeed the very best of us all
are too much attached to this world ; and hence it
happens, that when disappointment and troubles
arise, we are precluded those comforts, which re-
sult from a more intimate connection with things
above.

Thirdly and lastly. This divine truth, of a re-
surrection to everlasting life, is the only refuge of
our agonizing souls at the hour of death.

Mankind may speak as favourably as they please of their existence terminating with their present being, but annihilation is a subject which the human mind shudders at, and is the pitiful *beggarly* resort of the despairing sinner. Could we look into the *believer's* breast, when the pains of death have encompassed him, such an inspection would discover the triumphant exultation of the Christian over mortality and the grave. How glorious are those hopes which can support the soul amidst the convulsions of dissolving nature, dispel the horrors of anxiety, and irradiate the dark valley of death !

Will riches avail us at that awful period ? or will titles then stand the distinguished character in any stead ? The poverty of wealth, and the littleness of honour, never appear so conspicuous as in the dying hour. How infinitely valuable, therefore, must be those principles, which can afford us comfort when we stand most in need of it ; can administer it, when all the acquisitions of this world are incapable of doing so ; and can supply us with such consolations as shall be abundantly adequate to that dreadful extremity !

But our Lord hath assured us, that to him only we are indebted for our resurrection to eternal happiness. Should we not then most solicitously endeavour to secure an interest in so gracious a benefactor, and to act answerably to the terms and

conditions of so great salvation? Oh! my brethren, let us cheerfully comply with all his commands, however dear such a compliance may cost us; then shall we have the consciousness of our obedience, and the assistances of the Holy Spirit, to sustain us in our last conflict.

May the consideration of a future state moderate our sorrows for the removal of our friends, forbid our mourning as "others that have no hope." When we are attending their remains "unto the house appointed for all living," and, in the words of the Evangelist, "are going to the grave to weep there," let us take care that our sentiments and sensations be such "as become the gospel of Christ." For if our affection be great, and our loss severe, it is too probable that grief will suggest ideas inconsistent with our religious hopes. The silence and solemnity of the scene, and the sorrows arising from a reflection "that we shall see the faces of our departed friends no more," are apt to shut out every encouraging thought relative to a happy futurity. But while we are thus indulging desponding tendencies, and imagining that we are going to consign the ashes of our friends to everlasting darkness and oblivion, we are comfortably recovered from our melancholy by the divine assurances of a blessed immortality. "I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Lord;

Lord ; “ he that believeth in me, though he were
“ dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth, and
“ believeth in me, shall never die.”

May these gracious words sink deeply into our hearts, and regulate the conduct of our lives ! Let them not be restricted by us only to funeral solemnities, but let them be the daily subject of our meditations ; be ever about our path and about our bed, ever influence our thoughts and direct our ways ; “ that so, when the hour shall arrive, in the
“ which all that are in their graves shall hear the
“ voice of the Son of God, we, by having abounded
“ in every good word and work, may come forth
“ unto the resurrection of eternal life.”

Grant this, Almighty God, for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer ; to whom, with thee O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, majesty, and dominion, now and evermore.

S E R M O N III.

P S A L M xix. VERSE. 12.

*Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou
me from secret faults.*

IT hath long been received as an incontestable truth, that it is the hardest thing in the world for a man to acquire a full and exact knowledge of himself. It is likewise an established maxim, that such knowledge, so far as it is ascertainable by us, is absolutely necessary both to our comfort in this world, and to our everlasting happiness in the next. Whence comes it about, then, that a study so very essential to our welfare here and hereafter, is not only so little regarded by us, but is the most disagreeable lesson which can possibly be obtruded upon human nature? We confess the utility, importance, and superior worth of this branch of science, but nevertheless we shun all such learning as much as we can; or if we have engaged in it, we fall upon a thousand beggarly expedients to evade application and diligence.

When we passionately love our friends, do we not seek opportunities of introducing ourselves into their company, take pleasure in their conversation, and quit their society with reluctance?

But

But self is a nearer and dearer intimate than a friend. Whence happens it, then, that man is so averse to a close acquaintance and connection with this beloved object? *That he is so*, is evident from his conduct; for otherwise how can we account for his daily pursuit of little, mean, and insipid amusements; for his restless desires of shifting the scene, and going upon a fresh scent after pleasure? Why doth he plan an unremitting succession of entertainments, and hourly consign himself over from one folly to another? Why doth he hurry from country to town, and from the town back again into the country, in quest of something new? Why are foreign and adventitious delights, change of place, and change of company, the everlasting subjects of his thoughts? Why? but because home is extremely irksome to him, and his own company the most unacceptable of any he can meet with.

The Psalmist asketh, “Who can understand his errors?” Not that man, most assuredly, who maintains an indifference to this enquiry, who never inspects into his own breast, nor careth how oft he offendeth.

But it is a point agreed upon by the wise, the virtuous, and the religious, that SELF-ACQUAINTANCE is of unspeakable weight and consequence to every one of us.

Surely

Surely then it must be worth our while to examine into the causes of our disgust to this important branch of knowledge ; and in the next place to investigate those measures which have a direct tendency to make us proficient in this most valuable and extensive field of literature.

1st. Let us endeavour to search out the causes of that usual indifference and dislike, which the general herd of mankind discover to a thorough acquaintance and knowledge of themselves.

I. One grand obstacle to this instructive study is levity of spirit.

This disposition, next to a vicious temper, is one of the most unhappy turns, which the human mind can take. It brings us back again to a state of childhood ; and the only observable difference is *an exchange of toys*. A man of this complexion is the dupe of every extravagant fancy which ariseth in his breast. He resembles that mariner who puts to sea without rudder, anchor, or destination of port. No concerted plan to determine his voyage, no instruments to regulate his course, or to withhold him from being driven back by contrary currents.

A light, wanton, and desultory temper is incapable of that attention, steadiness, and perseverance, which are requisite for sober thought and
useful

useful reflection. Every new vanity arrests the eye and takes possession of the heart; it is not the *worth*, but the *novelty* of the object which recommends it, and no sooner is the novelty worn off, than the mind sickens of fruition, and is impatient to go after new pursuits.

But is not this levity of disposition highly derogatory to the dignity of *reasonable* beings? And, when we consider that we are candidates for eternity, and hastening, as fast as time can carry us, to another state of existence, in what a criminal light doth this temper appear to every serious observer? Shall a man, who hath business of everlasting importance to transact, and a very short period allotted him for the negotiating of such *vast* concerns, suffer himself to be drawn aside by vain amusements, and to lose sight of his grand object? Shall he, whose *all* lies at stake, and whose immortal happiness depends upon the due improvement of life's narrow span, be negligent of his main interest, and abandon himself to trifles and puerilities? Will he not, on the other hand, weigh even *MOMENTS* in the balance, nor part with one of them, but in purchase of its *real value*?

II. Indolence is another impediment to the knowledge I am treating of.

Some men are of that sluggish disposition, as to
remain

remain immoveable even under conviction. Although they are thoroughly satisfied of the force of a duty, and acknowledge the necessity of practising it, yet they cannot prevail with themselves to set about it. They frame a thousand excuses to avoid a present trouble, and are continually putting off till to-morrow, that which they ought to do to-day; for indolent persons are always dilatory, and repose great confidence in a precarious futurity. Their only objection to the time present is, because it is so; and therefore, while this habit continues, every future opportunity will be as objectionable, when it arrives, as prior opportunities have been.

Such a temper is highly culpable at all times; but the folly thereof is greatly aggravated, when matters of infinite consequence call for immediate dispatch. The man who composes himself to sleep during a storm, when the endangered vessel requires his utmost exertion, or who, during a fire, supinely sits folding his hands, when his safety demands the most expeditious speed, can NEVER be able to lift up his head under that load of reproach with which the world will condemn such egregious sloth. But can *this* be a more blameable character than *his*, who, when affairs of ETERNAL moment claim the greatest attention, diligence, and activity, is insensible of *such* engagements, and regardless of his *future* welfare?

III. A third obstacle to self-acquaintance is an immoderate thirst after pleasure.

This truth will appear very evident, if we consider, in the first place, that pleasure is always sure to engross the heart of that man who addict himself to it; and, in the second place, that it enervates and disqualifies the mind for all laborious pursuits. The love of pleasure is that *commanding* passion which usurps despotic power, and suffers no power to approach its throne, or *dispute with* it the empire of the human breast. And whoever yields himself up to pleasure, forfeits his liberty, and will find it a most difficult task to break loose from his bonds. Miserable, then, are those captives, to whom enlargement and freedom are almost impossible acquisitions! How cautious ought we to be of all such surrenders of ourselves, as preclude us the power of acting a wiser part for the future! How careful to shun such engagements, as are incompatible with thought and reflection, and leave no room for the respective offices and duties of life! *Engagements*, which render youth inglorious, and old age contemptible.

But such caution appears additionally necessary, when we consider the pernicious influences and effects of pleasure on the mind of man—

That

That it not only alienates our affections from God, seduces us from our duty, and arrogates the sole possession of our hearts ; but, what is a more dangerous evil still, it likewise emasculates the human mind, enervates all the powers of the soul, and disables us from the pursuit of what is great and good.

To a man who prizes liberty and independence, captivity is one of the greatest calamities which can befall him. But the loss of freedom, accompanied with loss of strength—a state of servitude, and at the same time an impotence of reason to extricate him out of his slavery—are surely the worst misfortunes that can happen to humanity : and, more particularly, when we subjoin, that pleasure not only robs us of our strength, but intoxicates the understanding, reconciles us to our fetters, and renders us averse to a discharge from our bondage. The knowledge of ourselves is a laborious study, and requires constant attention and indefatigable industry. No wonder, then, that a mind immersed in pleasures is reluctant to this arduous task. Such aversion is the natural consequence of voluptuousness and effeminacy. It may, with the strictest propriety, be said of pleasure, “ that HER poison is like the poison of
“ a serpent, and that the votaries of Pleasure are
“ like

“like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear;
“which refuseth to hear the voice of the charm-
“er, charm he never so wisely.”

What hath been said upon the subject of pleasure, will hold good with respect to wealth and ambition. The leading passion, *whatever it is*, is always imperious and clamorous in its demands, and never can brook a competitor. Talk to him that is greedy of gain, or to the ambitious person, about self-acquaintance, urge the dignity of the science, and expatiate upon its extensive advantages; and you shall be sure to find yourself a most unwelcome preceptor. Solicit the attentive regards of that man, whose heated imagination exhibits splendors and titles to his view; attempt conversation with the man of business, who rises early, goes to bed late, and eats the bread of carefulness, in order to accumulate riches; and what reception will you meet with from either of these characters? Like Felix, although converts to the truth of your doctrine, they will dismiss you in haste, and say, “Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” And, indeed, if they proceed so far, it is the utmost you are to expect from them. For, as the promise is conditional, and that convenient season

will never arrive, so the performance of their promise will never be fulfilled.

But it is not always levity or laziness; it is not only the love of pleasure, honour, or riches, which keeps men off from an acquaintance with their own hearts. It is sometimes a strong suspicion, that their breasts will not bear an inspection. They have reason to fear that things go wrong *THERE*, and therefore they decline all enquiries; as they who run behind hand in the world do not care to look into their books.

Sad indeed is the case of that man, whose guilt deters him from all researches into his own bosom. But, nevertheless, he will do well to consider, that, however painful such examinations may be, they are absolutely necessary, to prevent further accessions of guilt, and by a sincere repentance to cancel his former score.

Shall he who is sensible that he is in a diseased condition, defer the means of cure because medicines are offensive to the palate, and occasion a temporary uneasiness during their operation? On the other hand, will not delays rivet the distemper, and render matters altogether desperate? Or (to continue the former allusion) can a man, whose fortune is notoriously upon the decline, ever retrieve his affairs without examining into

his accounts, and thereby discovering the causes of the decay of his estate. It is true, that such retrospects will be productive of much inquietude, because many articles will reproach him for his indiscretion, folly, and extravagance ; but such inspection is his sole expedient, to preclude his ruin, and his present sufferings are his best security against his commission of future errors.

The case is precisely the same with regard to mental arithmetic. The books of the breast are frequently to be looked into, accounts to be faithfully stated, and a man's conduct to be determined accordingly.

But this brings me to the second general head of my discourse ; namely, to investigate those measures which have an immediate tendency to make us proficient in the school of *self-knowledge*.

The royal Psalmist hath furnished us with a most excellent rule relative to this grand enquiry—"Commune with your own heart in your chamber ;" or, as the words run in the later translation, "commune with your own heart upon your bed." The best place and the most seasonable period for self-converse ! The privacy, silence, and solemnity of the scene, all contribute to composure, thought, and seriousness. There the vanities and vexations of this world

are excluded. The labours and ordinary occupations of life cease, and all animosities, struggles, and competitions are quite subsided. In this sequestered retreat, all marks of distinction are laid aside — the high and the low, the prince and the subject, are all upon the same level; equally under the eye of one common master, and equally desirous of recommending themselves to his mercy, protection, and favour.

Well, therefore, hath the Psalmist recommended our chambers for self-communion; where the soul can retire without interruption, and ascertain a true knowledge of her state; can balance her accounts, examine her gains and her losses, and observe what proportion they bear to each other; can discover the particulars wherein her conduct hath been faulty, and learn how to rectify such errors for the time to come.

Ist. In the first place, whoever is desirous of obtaining a large portion of self-knowledge, must scrutinize into his own heart with great care and diligence.

It is a study that calls for unwearied application; and he who thinks otherwise, will find himself in a great error, when he comes to make the experiment. It is extremely difficult to pervade the intimate recesses of our own bosoms. There are so many turnings and windings to obstruct

frustrate and confound our search, and so much art and disguise practised there, to discourage and mislead us in our enquiries, that it demands no small share of resolution and perseverance to continue our pursuits of knowledge. The prophet Jeremiah assures us, that “the heart is deceitful above all things,” and, under the form of an interrogatory, he insinuates the difficulty of a thorough acquaintance with it, “WHO CAN KNOW IT?” And indeed it is much more deceitful than we are aware of. Although we may censure our neighbours sometimes for their unjust dealings and fraudulent behaviour towards us, yet we may nevertheless be assured, that the greatest of all cheats are the inmates of our own breasts. And that, as they are ever present with us, and ever ready to beguile us, we cannot be too much upon our guard against their treachery and artifice.

I have already observed, that it is with great reluctance we enter upon this study of ourselves, and that we are too apt to be pleased with every trifling avocation which falls in our way. This circumstance abundantly suggests to us the great necessity of vigilance, attention, and industry in our prosecution of this important branch of knowledge. But,

2dly. Again, we must likewise practise the utmost SINCERITY, when we sit in judgment upon ourselves, ever remembering, that there will be a RE-HEARING in another court, and that we shall be called to a strict account, at God's tribunal, for partiality and self-indulgence,

As man is both the judge and the criminal, he will be in great danger (unless very much upon his guard) of being biased in his judicial capacity, and passing such a favourable sentence upon himself as will be set aside hereafter, and subject him to the severest punishment. We must not think of pleading ignorance or inability at the bar of God, in justification of our partial awards.

As we are appointed judges of our own breasts, so the fault will lie at our doors, if we do not endeavour our very utmost to qualify ourselves for this serious and awful province. The Almighty hath given us capacities for this end; and woe to us if we do not improve them to the purposes for which they were bestowed upon us. It is an undoubted truth, that this judiciary office is a very arduous appointment. But the difficulties which accompany it will never be admitted as excuses for inattention and negligence, and much less for partiality and falsehood, in our execution of this great trust. Whatever lets and
and

and discouragements may lie in our way—whatever labour and toil we may undergo, all these temporary inconveniences or evils are designed to render us more watchful, more active, and more exact in our discharge of this solemn and momentous duty.

Wherefore, since ability, diligence, and impartiality are expected at our hands, let us “keep our hearts with all diligence,” setting a guard at every avenue, where vice or folly may gain admission. Many and various are the inlets of sin and corruption: from our very tempers, inclinations, and passions; from constitution, education, and custom, a *thousand* errors may derive their birth, and pass unnoticed and disregarded by us, unless we maintain a constant watch, and narrowly pry into all the dark recesses of the mind.

3dly. But, in the third and last place, there is nothing which so effectually contributes to our advancements in self-knowledge as frequent and fervent prayer.

When we withdraw ourselves from the world, that great theatre of business and care on the one hand, and of diversion and dissipation on the other; when we shut the door of our closets, call home our straggling thoughts, and consider ourselves as in the more immediate presence of Almighty God, THEN commences self-inspec-

tion, which discovers our wants and our weakness, our manifold sins and wickedness, and the necessity of repentance and remission. Reiterated and devout prayer was practised by the holy Psalmist, as the means of attaining self-acquaintance. He was very desirous of understanding his errors; but, at the same time, he was abundantly sensible of his insufficiency for so difficult a task. He knew that many of his faults withdrew themselves from his inspection, and eluded his most diligent enquiries; and therefore, he applied to the "Searcher of all hearts," for the discovery of his unsuspected miscarriages, and for the pardon likewise of those absconding crimes; "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

We have a passage much to the same purpose at the conclusion of the 139th Psalm; where the royal suppliant professes his deficiency in self-knowledge; and upon his knees implores, that the Almighty would forgive the imperfection of his scrutinies, and graciously supply the defects of his understanding—"Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts.—Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

It is certain, that if we are SINCERE in the profession of our desires after self-knowledge, we
cannot

cannot pursue more effectual methods for *this* end, than repeated and importunate addressees to that sovereign Being, whose omniscience and infinite wisdom altogether qualify him to give us full and explicit instructions upon this subject. "He that planted the ear, shall not HE HEAR?" "he that made the eye, shall not HE SEE?" "and he that formed the heart, shall not HE KNOW?"

Let us then be frequent and fervent in our applications to the Fountain of light and knowledge, for the assistances of his grace, and the illuminations of his Divine Spirit; always keeping in mind the encouraging assurances of our blessed Saviour—"Ask and it shall be given you."

Wherefore, let us conclude with the following prayer :

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Christ, our Lord.

S E R M O N IV.

MATTHEW CHAP. viii. VER. 25.*Lord save us: we perish.*

THE chapter from which I have taken my text (for your instruction and my own) abounds with several occurrences highly worthy of our consideration. And, although the words I have now read to you are a detached passage from the preceding incidents, yet it will be worth our while to regard this importunate address of the disciples connectedly with the several miracles of our Lord, which are mentioned previously to their request.

This chapter is ushered in with our Saviour's cure of a leper, verses first, second, and third—
 “ When he came down from the mountain, great
 “ multitudes followed him. And behold there
 “ came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord,
 “ if *thou wilt*, *thou* canst make me *clean*. And
 “ Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, say-
 “ ing, *I will*; be thou clean. And immediately
 “ his leprosy was cleansed.”

Here it is to be noticed, that the *Jewish leprosy* was a disease peculiarly difficult of cure. If you look to the Mosaic account of this distemper (in the

chapter of Leviticus) you must observe, that dreadful calamity was of that virulent and malignant nature, as not only to seize upon mankind, but to reclude the unhappy sufferers from all society, and even to infect the garments and furniture, and stain the very walls of the houses.

but then must be the power of our blessed who, by the application of his hand, and a word from his mouth, could restore *so* *ble* an object to perfect health ! I dare say we all tempted to think, that if *we* had been witnesses to this instantaneous cure of so loathsome and obstinate an evil, we should never afterwards have called into question the power of the almighty.

The next miracle which presents itself, is the surprising recovery of the centurion's servant. There are several circumstances attending this history, which are not cursorily to be passed over.

The account runs thus—"And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him ; and saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof ; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For *I* am a

" man

“ man under authority, having soldiers under me;
 “ and I say to this man go, and he goeth, and to
 “ another come, and he cometh, and to my ser-
 “ vant do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus
 “ heard it, he marvelled, and said unto them that
 “ followe!, Verily I say unto you, I have not found
 “ so great faith, *no* not in ISRAEL. And I say
 “ unto you, that many shall come from the east
 “ and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and
 “ Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.
 “ But the children of the kingdom shall be cast
 “ into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and
 “ gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said unto the
 “ centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast be-
 “ lieved, so be it done unto thee. And his servant
 “ was healed in the self-same hour.”

This centurion was a Roman and a Gentile.
 It is certain that he was a man of a very benevo-
 lent disposition, from the encomiums which the
 Jews passed upon him. For in St. Luke's * ac-
 count of this story, the elders of the Jews are said
 to interpose in the centurion's behalf, and to give
 additional weight to his petition, by saying, that he
 was worthy of the favour he was soliciting at our
 Lord's hands, because he loved their nation, and
 had built for them a synagogue.

* Luke vii.

It is not altogether improbable, that the centurion was partly a believer in the God of the Jews. For although the Romans had their appropriated deities, yet they seldom controverted the deities of other nations, and sometimes even admitted foreign gods into their own catalogue of divinities. But be this as it will, it is undoubtedly true that the centurion, by the very nature of his request, esteemed our Lord as possessed of the power of a God. Perhaps what induced him to entertain such sentiments of our Saviour, might be a prior acquaintance with the miracle which Jesus had wrought in Cana of Galilee, when he changed the water into wine at a marriage feast; or (what still carries greater probability in it) as the centurion and his soldiers were stationed at Capernaum, he might have received the most authentic intelligence of the extraordinary cure which Jesus had performed upon the nobleman's son in that city; for, since true faith can only be founded upon a candid and diligent attention to proper evidence, we must suppose that the centurion had founded his belief and confidence in our Lord upon proofs of some miraculous exertions of his divine power. But when we consider that the recovery of the nobleman's son was effected by Jesus at the great distance of Cana from Capernaum, and that the cure was wrought upon the noble-

man's

man's child at a single instant of time, it is natural to conclude that the centurion had been apprized of this wonderful fact, and from thence had drawn inferences applicable to his own circumstances. This hypothesis is further confirmed by the centurion's manner of reasoning in his address to Jesus. " Lord, (said this believing officer) I am unworthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but **SPEAK THE WORD ONLY,** and my servant shall be healed."—" For if I, who only personate a subordinate character in the army, can procure an exact obedience to my commands, by the means of intermediate servants, and without my personal appearance to enforce my orders; how can I possibly doubt of the sovereignty of **YOUR WORD**, who spake the nobleman's son into health, with the intervention of the distance of Cana from Capernaum?" I say, it is very likely that the Centurion had deduced this method of argument from his previous knowledge of the restoration of the nobleman's son; for otherwise it is reasonable to suppose, that he would have adopted the expression of the nobleman, " Sir, come down ere my servant die." Whereas the centurion's request was not couched in words importing the **NECESSITY** of our Lord's **PRESENCE**, but carried a far stronger and more emphatical confidence in
the

the sufficiency of the power of our Saviour. " Lord, I am unworthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus most graciously complied with his petition, and enhanced the favour of the benefit by his commendation of the centurion's trust and affiance. " When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said unto them which followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, *no not in ISRAEL!*"

The third miracle which follows in the order of this chapter, is the sudden recovery of the mother of Simon Peter's wife. It is said that she was confined to her bed by a fever; our Lord reached out his all-healing hand, and immediately reinstated her in her former health. We know very well, that when, through a kind providence, we are raised from a bed of sickness, we are nevertheless so enervated by the violence of the disease, that time, tenderness, and a further pursuit of medicine, are often necessary to conciliate strength and spirits to our shattered systems. But when Jesus removed the matron's fever, he restored her at the same instant to a plenitude of strength; for in the same verse she is represented as capable of doing the offices of gratitude and friendship to her divine guest. "*And she arose and ministered unto them.*"

I now

I now proceed to the fourth miracle mentioned in this chapter ; the incidents of which story were productive of the petition which constitutes my text.

“ And when he was entered into a ship, his
 “ disciples followed him ; and behold there arose
 “ a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship
 “ was covered with the waves ; but he was asleep.
 “ And his disciples came to him, and awoke him,
 “ saying, Lord ! save us : we perish. And he
 “ saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye
 “ of little faith ? Then he arose, and rebuked the
 “ winds and the sea, and there was a calm.” The
 consequence of which miracle was a strange animadversion of the disciples upon it. “ But the
 “ men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is
 “ this, that even the winds and the sea obey
 “ him ?”

These very men, who express so great a degree of surprize at our Lord’s commands relative to the tempestuous deep, had (as it may reasonably be presumed) been witnesses to the several miracles I have enumerated. They had seen the leper cured of his cutaneous deformity ; or, in the scriptural phrase, “ that his flesh came again, like unto
 “ the flesh of a little child, and that he was
 “ clean *.” They had been satisfactorily ap-

* 2 Kings v. 14.

prized of the miraculous recovery of the centurion's servant; and had been favoured with ocular proofs of the sudden restoration of the mother of one of the disciples wives—Whence proceeded then this consternation and exclamatory expression of wonder at the sovereignty of Jesus over the turbulent elements?

Now it is necessary to observe here, that in all the prior miracles of our Saviour, his disciples were not personally interested, as to their own immediate health and security. And it is likewise worthy of notice, that the miracle which Jesus wrought for their safety was entirely *new*; or, in other words, was such an astonishing display of power as our Lord had never exerted before. They had seen a leprosy altogether removed by the touch of their Divine Master. They had known repeated instances of the cure of fevers effected by his gracious interposition in behalf of the diseased. But to silence, by a single command from his mouth, the raging of the winds, and the fury of the waves, implied such a degree of sovereignty as quite surpassed all former manifestations, and therefore gave a violent concussion to their faith. It is only from the extremity of their danger, and this unprecedented example of our Lord's power, that we can deduce this failure of their confidence in our blessed Saviour. And, however superior they

might be at that period to the rest of mankind, as touching the main and principal parts of their character; yet in some particular instances their conduct was very deficient, and such as frequently betrayed the usual infirmities of human nature.

How often were they reproved by Jesus for their want of moderation, candour, and charity*! and HOW VERY OFTEN for their want of † faith! Perhaps they could hardly have exhibited a stronger proof of their defective faith, than upon the present occasion. For their master was at that juncture in the same ship with them, and equally exposed to the dangers of the tempest. Could they possibly imagine that he was susceptible of injury from the storm? or, that if he was able to extricate *himself* from the perils thereof, yet, that he was incapable of sufficiently providing for *their* safety?—But it is said, that he lay asleep upon a pillow in the stern of the ship ‡. Was the guilt of their distrust alleviated by this circumstance of their master's repose? Could they prevail with themselves to believe, that the slumbers of humanity could suppress the authority and might of his divine nature? Nevertheless, from St. Mark's words, and from the reprehension of their

* Luke ix. 38.—Matth. xv. 23.—xxvi. 52.

† Matth. vi. 30.—xiv. 31.—xvii. 20.

‡ Mark iv. 38.

behaviour by our Lord, it may fairly be presumed, that such derogatory sentiments had a place in their breasts. For they did not only awake him out of sleep (which very action imported timidity and loss of confidence) but they confirmed this proof of the greatness of their fears, and the weakness of their faith, by asking him whether he was regardless of their safety. As if they had said, ‘ Master, why do you indulge sleep, when danger threatens from every quarter ? The impetuosity of the winds and the force of the waves endanger, every moment, a breach in the structure of the ship ; or, if the strength of the vessel be adequate to these concurrent difficulties, doth not the quantity of water, with which the vessel is filled by the overflowings of the billows, menace the more speedy destruction of it ? ’ — The Evangelist subjoins, that hereupon Jesus spake silence to the wind and stillness to the sea ; and immediately these tumultuous elements obeyed his divine mandate. As soon as the storm was subsided, our Lord is represented by St. Mark, as reproving his diffident disciples, with this emphatical interrogatory — “ Why are ye so fearful ? How is it that ye have NO FAITH * ? ”

* Mark iv. 40.

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Do you enquire whence it came to pass, that these immediate scholars of our Lord were no better proficient in the doctrines of their sacred preceptor? and why such defective characters were honoured with a peculiar commission to explain and propagate the religion of their divine Master?—I answer, that such researches into the decrees of Heaven very ill become the sons of men; especially when these enquiries are pushed beyond the boundaries limited in the scriptures. The most eminent prophets of ancient times were not exempted from human failings. Even Moses and Elias “were men subject to like passions as we are *.” St. Paul’s solution of this difficulty is this, “that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” Hence it is, says he, “that we have this treasure in earthen vessels †.”

But, my friends, there are some peculiar qualifications (and most amiable qualifications they are) which distinguished the disciples in a pre-eminent degree—I mean their spotless integrity; their inviolable attachment to the truth at the expence of their own credit; their steady regard for their master’s honour, and for the utility of

* James v. 17.

† 2 Cor. iv. 7.

his gospel, at the loss of their reputations, their comforts, and their lives.

Alas ! my brethren, instead of examining narrowly into the blemishes of *their* characters, and exaggerating the venial defects discoverable therein, we should act a more prudent, useful, and pious part, by scrutinizing into our *own* bosoms ; where, believe me, we shall all have the mortification of seeing how shamefully the very best of us fall short even of the most inferior attainments of these disciples of Jesus.

Are *we* severe upon the deficiency of *their* faith ? Where is the man amongst us, who can stand forth and say, that his trust and confidence hath never failed, even under trials and temptations far less forcible than those with which the Apostles were exercised ?

What innumerable favours have *we* received at the hands of God ! what signal deliveries from sickness, dangers, and death have *we* experienced ! and how little have all these kind interpositions of Providence availed us, with regard to our future hopes, trust, and dependence upon the wisdom, power, and goodness of our Almighty benefactor !

But to return.—“ And behold, there arose a
“ great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship
“ was covered with waves. And the disciples

“came to him and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish.”

And, oh ! my brethren, cannot *we*, with the greatest propriety, adopt this importunate prayer? When we reflect upon our innumerable sins, and consider the just judgment that waits upon such repeated and aggravated offences, surely it becomes us all to put up this fervent petition to the throne of grace, “Lord save us, or we perish.” Indeed, to whom can we go, but to JESUS, who hath the words of eternal life? who alone can mediate with the offended Majesty of Heaven, conciliate the divine favour, and secure to us an admission into the regions of everlasting happiness.

We are poor, indigent, sinful creatures; and therefore stand in need of one, “who is mighty to “save”—who can supply all our wants by his fulness, and cancel all our iniquities by his merits. The Son of God is alone capable of answering all these gracious purposes to us. The whole creation beside cannot stand us in any stead. But the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, and restores the penitent transgressor to his forfeited innocence. By this blessed atonement the wretched delinquent is entitled to sue for mercy; and, upon yielding a faithful obedience to the conditions of his redemption, hath the comfortable assurance of an irrevocable

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vocable pardon. Yes—To whom then shall we go but to him, who, by offering up himself a sacrifice for our guilt, hath ransomed us from the punishment due to it, and at the same time purchased for us a claim to life and immortality?

What shall we say, then, to those, who either coldly receive or wilfully neglect *so great salvation?* to those who cavil at the means of grace, and reject the terms of the gospel, because these sacred conditions do not quadrate with their particular mode of thinking? How many occurrences are there in the natural world, which the wisest of the sons of men are incapable of explaining! “The wind bloweth where it listeth *;” but who can satisfactorily account for its origin, direction, and termination? This was the reasoning of infinite Wisdom; and thrice happy he, who owns the divine authority of this preacher, is abundantly convinced of the weight of his argument, and whose inferences and practices are answerable to his convictions! Why then should we contest spiritual truths? Are they not, in their very nature and essence, superior to the capacity of the human mind? Alas! how little do we know of that spiritual and intellectual part of us, which superintends, commands, and actuates our corpo-

* John iii. 8.

real fabric ? Nor is our ignorance limited only to the mental half of us—there are several difficulties which occur in our bodily structure, and which the most accurate anatomists could never solve to their entire satisfaction. The Psalmist says, that “we are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Even the material and coarser part of our composition exhibits such ample displays of Divine skill, as surpass all human comprehension ! If, therefore, we are incompetent judges of earthly things, how can we form adequate conceptions of heavenly things ?

The doctrine of the redemption was “to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.” The sensual and ambitious views of the former had disposed them to expect a temporal prince, whose kingdom was to be of this world ; and to reject the true Messiah, because he had professed that his dominion was of a far sublimer nature, than all the kingdoms of this earth, and the glory thereof !

The Greeks, valuing themselves for science and the ornamental parts of learning, could not be prevailed upon to relish simple and unadorned truths, especially such truths as were diametrically opposite to their political and religious maxims. To men who prided themselves in the refinements

refinements of literature, the investigations of philosophy, and the charms of eloquence, a *crucified* leader and Saviour appeared such a *solecism*, as precluded their belief, and provoked their derision. Vanity, ostentation, and arrogance, had blinded the eyes of their understanding, and betrayed them into false notions of excellency. They were incapable of discovering the real greatness of humility, disinterestedness, and universal benevolence—all characteristics of the gospel of Jesus! That extensiveness of the morality which he had inculcated; that purity of heart which he had enjoined; and that spirituality of worship which he had exacted of his followers, were matters of offence to supercilious philosophers, partial moralists, and bigoted idolaters. But did this charge of ambition, pride, and sensuality lie only at the doors of the Jews and Greeks?—Alas! no.—We shall find, even in the breasts of those who were more immediately educated in the school of Christ, and daily set at the feet of their great Master, that some of these unworthy passions were but too prevalent. The mother of Zebedee's sons had imaged to herself an opulent and splendid monarchy, and therefore had desired our Lord to invest her children with the principal offices of state*.

* Matth. xx. 21, 23.

When Jesus had hinted to his disciples, that his sufferings and death were speedily approaching, Peter was instantly alarmed at so mortifying a declaration. He could not repress his lucrative and ambitious prospects; but, in all the temerity of disappointment and despair, he answered, “That * be far from thee, Lord *.”

It is likewise observable, that the crucifixion of Jesus had almost extinguished every hope in the bosoms of his disciples and followers; to every one of them were applicable the despondent words of Cleopas—“*But we trusted that it had been*” “HE which should have REDEEMED *Israel* †.”

Indeed it doth not appear, that our Saviour’s disciples had entertained clear and explicit sentiments of the nature of our Lord’s kingdom till the descent of the Holy Ghost at the feast of Pentecost; which festival our church hath commemorated this day. So far were they from laying aside their secular views, that, after our Lord’s death and resurrection, they asked him, “Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” But after the descent of the Holy Spirit, they corrected their erroneous opinions, and entered into the true genius or nature of Christianity.

* Matth. xvi. 22.

† Luke xxiv. 21.

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The miraculous descent now mentioned was a most glorious display of Almighty power, frequently referred to in the predictions of our Saviour, and was an event of the utmost importance to the Christian dispensation. It is said that the Holy Ghost came down from heaven "as a mighty rushing wind," thereby to denote the force and energy of his operations. It is also observed, that the Divine Spirit fell upon the apostles, and the rest of the disciples, in the form of tongues, cloven or divided into several parts, thereby signifying that miraculous diversity of languages, with which the whole assembly was endowed. But, as you have heard this morning a particular account of this extraordinary truth, recorded by the Evangelist St. Luke, in his history of the Acts of the Apostles, I shall no longer enlarge upon this subject.

To conclude.—Let the signs and wonders which our blessed Saviour wrought to confirm his authority and religion, have their due weight upon our minds. Let us always remember, that our Lord rested great strength upon this argument. "Believe in me," said Jesus to his disciples, "for my very works' sake." And again, when our Lord was noticing the obstinate perverseness of the Jews, he made use of these words—"If I had not done among them the
" works

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“ works which none other man did, they had not
 “ had sin.” That is, if I had not given them those
 irrefragable proofs of my divine character, their
 incredulity and opposition had been blameless.

The miracles of our Lord were infinitely superior to human wisdom and human might. He gave instantaneous sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, health to the sick, and life to the dead. My brethren, what further evidences can we desire in behalf of our Lord’s sacred mission and doctrine? If we now resist those demonstrations of the height of his power and the excellence of his precepts, what will be our plea for such unbelief at the last great day of accounts? Who shall dare, at that tremendous period, to stand forth and tell the judge of the whole world, that the many miracles which he graciously wrought during his abode on earth, were insufficient for the purposes of conviction?

But I trust that we, my friends, are most abundantly satisfied with those proofs of our most holy religion, and exceedingly thankful for such distinguished favours. Wherefore, “ let us hold
 “ fast our profession in Jesus; nor be of them who
 “ draw back unto perdition, but of them that
 “ believe, unto the saving of the soul*.”—Grant

* Heb. iv. 14.—x. 39.

this,

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this, O heavenly Father, for the sake of thy Son, our Saviour and Redeemer. To whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour, &c.

S E R M O N V.

*The First Epistle of St. PAUL to the
CORINTHIANS,*

CHAP. XV. VERSES 53 and 54.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in
" victory."*

TO a good man there cannot be a more comfortable and delightful truth than this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. The love of life, which is a passion implanted in the breast of all mankind, naturally leads us to wish for an existence beyond the grave. And sure enough it is, that, even abstracted from revelation, there are many concurrent circumstances to justify our belief

lief of a life to come in the invisible world. Long before our blessed Saviour made his appearance upon earth, the wiser part of the Heathen world declared their expectations of surviving the grave. Nor were these hopes confined to the sensible and thinking few of the pagan nations. The expectations of a future state of being prevailed among the common herd of men. And it is well known that at this day there are but few communities of the most unenlightened savages, who do not believe that they shall go to some other world, after they are removed out of this. It is true indeed that their notions of an hereafter are very imperfect, and accompanied with many absurdities. Nevertheless, the universal or extensive prevalence of this belief is adjudged to be a strong presumptive argument in behalf of a future existence.

But of all the natural arguments in favour of this doctrine, there is none which carries so great strength in it, as the promiscuous dispensation of God's providence in this world.—The frequent prosperity of the wicked, and the afflicted condition of the pious and good, make it highly probable that there will be a state of life after this, where the former will receive the punishment due to their demerits, and the latter the reward of their righteousness. It was an observation of the wise king of Israel, and our own experience confirms this melancholy

lancholy truth, that the best of characters are not particularly favoured by Heaven; but that the most worthless of the sons of men share, in common with the most worthy, the beneficence of the Deity with regard to secular comforts.—“ All things, says Solomon, come alike to all—there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath *.”—According to this representation of all sublunary affairs, what judgment are we to form of the divine œconomy? “ Hath the good man cleansed his heart in vain; and hath he in vain washed his hands in innocency † ?” Surely such integrity cannot go unrewarded! Our natural notions lead us, upon this subject, to say with Abraham, “ Shall not the judge of all the earth do right ‡ ?” We cannot possibly suppose that a Being of infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness, can look with *indifference* upon virtue and vice, upon him that feareth God, and upon him that feareth him not. We should offer violence to our own reason, did we attempt to reconcile such indifference with the known attributes of the Deity.

* Ecclesiastes ix. 2.

† Psalm lxxiii. 13.

‡ Gen. xviii. 25.

Whence it follows, that since the Almighty is infinitely wise, infinitely just, and infinitely good, there must be a future state of Being, in which all seeming difficulties shall not only be removed, but, by what we may now gather from passages in divine revelation, the rectitude of all providential measures shall be acknowledged, applauded, and adored by men and angels. Or, to use the words of St. Paul, there will be a state of existence hereafter, in which “ God will render to every man according to his deeds—to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil *.”

What hath been said upon this head is perfectly agreeable to reason, and to our natural ideas of the divine government. But revealed religion hath shed so bright a light upon this subject, that there only remains one apparent difficulty; which the Apostle, in the chapter whence I have taken my text, hath abundantly cleared up.

When we die, our bodies dissolve into putrefaction, and in length of time become *real earth*.

* Romans ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

This truth being allowed, a question is supposed to result, “How are the dead *raised up*, and with “what *body* do they come?” But, previously to our mentioning of the Apostle’s answer to this enquiry, let us ask ourselves whether we apprehend it to be a great difficulty for God to “form “man, and breathe into his nostrils the breath of “life *?” Can we possibly imagine that anything is difficult to Omnipotence? to Him, who only said, at the creation of the world, “Let there be light, “and there was light;” and which almighty word was spoken at a period, when “the earth was “without form, and void, and darkness was upon “the face of the deep †?” And if we believe, as indeed we must believe, that the creation of man was not a greater effort of sovereign power than the creation of the world, and of all the firmament above, we cannot suppose that at the resurrection-day it will require more exertion of power to call us to life out of our graves, than it did at first to form us out of the dust.——This reasoning is very obvious, and is the more valuable because it is plain, and level to every capacity. We might be imposed upon in points that called for curious and nice argumentations, or our understandings might be insufficient to comprehend a long chain of rea-

* Gen. i. 7.

† Ibid. i. 3 and 2.

sons. But there can be no fraud or difficulty in asserting or believing that “all things are possible with God.”

I proceed now to St. Paul’s argument—“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die—and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.”

You will here observe, from the appellation given to this scornful enquirer, and from the plain and convincing solution of his question, that the Apostle regarded the objection as weak and trifling. The words may be thus paraphrased:—“You ask how a dead body, after it hath rotted in the grave, and all the particles of which it consisted are dissolved, and perhaps scattered abroad, so as to become parts of other bodies, can possibly be made alive again. But do you well consider who HE is, that undertakes this wonderful work? Are you sufficiently acquainted with the greatness and extent of his almighty power? Or can you prevail upon yourself to think “that any thing is too hard for the Lord?” But if the interrogatories,

teries; now tendered; rather silence than satisfy your doubts, turn your thoughts to the vegetable world. The grain which you sow, whether it be wheat, barley; or any other grain, all to human appearances die and perish in the earth. Nevertheless, from this seeming state of corruption and death, there by and by springs from each grain the body which God hath appropriated to it. The grain of wheat produces stalks of wheat; and the grain of barley, when committed to the ground, vegetates again, preserving its sameness through every stage of growth, even to its maturity. But can you account for all the measures of this wonderful process? If you cannot, then it is absurdity and folly to argue against the resurrection of the dead, because your limited understanding is unable to comprehend the way and method, by which such an event is to be brought about."

And here let me digress so far as to observe, that the objections to scriptural truths are founded in ignorance; and that we should never entertain doubts and scruples about such things as are positively asserted in the sacred writings. Even amidst the most common occurrences, are there not a thousand difficulties daily presenting themselves, which are inexplicable by the very wisest of the sons of men? Our hearts continue to beat, and

our lungs continue to breathe; but who can account satisfactorily for the unwearied and regular motions either of the one or of the other? We move, or we sit still, just as our inclinations or exigencies require; but who can discover to us the true causes, why our members are subject to our will, either as to exercise or rest? With regard to more external matters, such as the elements about us, was there ever that learned man, who could account for their constituent principles, and the manner of their action? Hear the words of the Son of God upon this subject, in his conversation with Nicodemus—"The wind
 " bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the
 " sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it com-
 " eth, nor whither it goeth *." The causes of the directions and variations of the wind is a piece of knowledge which defeats all our inquiries. But to deny such facts, because we cannot explain them, would justly expose us to derision and contempt. Be it then our endeavours to suppress in us a sceptical disposition and turn of mind for contentious disputations. On the contrary, let us maintain a modest, humble, and quiet temper, resting satisfied with the doctrines of the gospel, without any ambition to be wise "above

* John iii. 8.

“ that which is written *.” Let us be more attentive to the practical than speculative parts of religion, and then we shall consult the peace of our minds, and advance the improvement of our hearts. And, at the same time that we grow good and happy, we shall promote the comfort and welfare of others, winning them over to the belief and practice of our most holy faith, by the prudence and piety of our behaviour.

St. Paul evidently triumphs in the doctrine of the resurrection. There is a peculiar sublimity of sentiment and language, which runs through the whole of the chapter, and more especially when he quits the argumentative part. For, when this great apostle is reasoning upon this subject, his grounds of persuasion are as plain as they are forcible, and his diction is simple and level to every capacity. But after he hath established this important truth, you will observe, that his thoughts and expressions become more grand and lofty. In his further comments upon this glorious principle of Christianity, there is such a strain of joy and exultation attending his discourse, that I believe there are few conversant with it, who are not powerfully struck with the divine oratory of its illustrious author. We can-

* 1 Cor. iv. 6.

not reflect upon that grandeur and immortality which await the souls of good men in another life, without secret transports, and fervent wishes of becoming their associates in happiness in a future state. To adopt a scripture interrogatory, "Do not our hearts burn within us *," while we read the following verses of St. Paul? "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly: and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly! Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption." Here, then, appears a difficulty: for if

* Luke xxiv. 32.

flesh and blood are incompatible with the kingdom of God, and corruption has neither any connection with, nor claim to incorruption, what will become of all those who shall have died prior to the resurrection, and of those who, at that awful period, shall be found alive; or, in other words, of those who shall then be possessed of mortal and corruptible bodies?

The Apostle gives us the solution of this question, by an affirmation, under the force and sanction of divine inspiration. He tells us, that there will be many living at the great day of the resurrection; but that, however surprizing it may appear, yet the process of that grand solemnity will remove every difficulty, and confirm the truth of his sacred doctrine. Be pleased to observe attentively, what he further advances upon this most interesting subject:—"Behold, I shew
 "you a mystery—we shall not all sleep, but we
 "shall all be changed; in a moment, in the
 "twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for
 "the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall
 "be raised incorruptible, and we shall be chang-
 "ed." The short parenthesis in this verse is descriptive of a very *remarkable circumstance* attending the grandeur of this stupendous scene. St. Paul assures us, that the wonderful operation effected upon the bodies of those who are found

alive at the resurrection shall take place, *when the last trumpet shall found*, to awaken all the millions of saints who are sleeping in the dust. “For the trumpet shall then found”—the voice of the archangel, and attending celestial legions, shall fill the whole earth and heaven, and the dead shall immediately hear and obey the divine summons. The bodies of good men shall then be raised incorruptible, and those pious characters who shall be living at the last day, shall have their bodies changed, like the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, who were taken into heaven without the previous introduction of dying. The Apostle thus goes on: “—For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality—So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” Whereupon the Apostle triumphantly breaks forth into the following inquiries:—“O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?”

From the account now given of the rising of the dead, I shall draw two inferences.

- 1st. The necessity of a religious life, in order to partake of a happy resurrection.

Illy.

IIIdly. The support and comfort which this doctrine affords to the mind of man, under the heaviest disappointments and most painful sufferings.

Ist. The necessity of a religious life, in order to take of a happy resurrection.

Though it is very true that ALL the dead shall from their graves at the last day, or, to use sacred and emphatical words of our blessed saviour: "The hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*;" yet it is obvious, upon a careful perusal of St. Paul's address here to the church of Corinth, that the Apostle is not speaking of the resurrection in *general*, but of the resurrection of *just men*; or, to speak his own phrase, "of those who are Christ's at his coming." Whence it follows, that the good only are entitled to the distinguished honours enumerated in this chapter by St. Paul. So that if we live debauched and wicked lives, we can have no grounds to entertain hopes of a joyful resurrection. This is

* John v. 28, 29.

a truth worthy of our utmost attention ; because we frequently see multitudes, in a dying hour, flattering themselves with expectations of a happy resurrection, without having taken those previous measures, which the gospel hath enjoined, to prepare and fit us for this glorious change. Alas ! the man who hath lived viciously, cannot die virtuously ; and therefore cannot be happy after death. It is true, that when he finds himself departing out of this world, and is conscious that all his endeavours to obtain a longer abode here are weak and ineffectual, he indulgeth wishes of rising from his dust to immortality and happiness. But those vicious dispositions of his mind, which he carries with him out of this world, he will assuredly retain in the next. “ He that is unjust, “ will be unjust still, and he that is filthy, will be “ filthy still*.” And such unrighteousness and impurity must, in their own nature, disqualify him for that glory and permanent splendor, which shall be the portion of those who, in this world, shall have subdued every inordinate lust and affection, and shall have “ purified themselves even “ as God is pure †.”

Whoever shall be desirous of sharing in the joys of a blessed resurrection, must exert his ut-

* Revelation xxii. 11.

† 1 John iii. 3.

most diligence to act answerably to his Christian profession. “He must do justice, love mercy, “and walk humbly before God*.” He must “deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and” must “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this “present world†.” He must “add to his faith “virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to know- “ledge temperance, and to temperance patience, “and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity‡.” In all these virtues and graces he must abound, if he now wishes to bear, at the last day, the image of the heavenly Adam (as St. Paul expresses himself on this subject); that is, to resemble Jesus Christ in purity, glory, and immortality. The consequence of which high and distinguished honour shall be, a happy “entrance admitted unto him into the everlasting kingdom “of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ§.”—— We must likewise strive, in this life, to excel in holiness, that we may excel in glory in the next. The Apostle informs us, that the degrees of splendor and happiness of the pious dead, will be proportionate, at the resurrection, to their several and respective advancements in Christian

* Micah vi. 8. † Titus ii. 12. ‡ 2 Pet. i.
5, 6, 7. § Ibid. i. 11.

perfection. Attend to his own own words—
 “ There is one glory of the sun, and another
 “ glory of the moon, and another glory of the
 “ stars; for one star differeth from another star
 “ in glory—so also is the resurrection of the
 “ dead.” And surely it is a most laudable ambition to endeavour at excelling in goodness, since such pre-eminence will promote us to a higher rank of glory and felicity. We must likewise maintain a steadiness and uniformity in our practice of all religious duties. No temptations are to seduce us; no difficulties are to discourage us. We must be superior to all the blandishments of sinful pleasures, however artfully and importunately they may address themselves to our various lusts and passions. We must also “ endure hardships, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, and fight the
 “ good fight of faith *”—not only resist whatever would allure us from the discharge of our duty, but persevere in our warfare, obey “ the captain of our salvation,” and resolutely continue “ faithful unto death;” more especially since we are assured, by divine declaration, that such inviolable fidelity shall be rewarded “ with a crown
 “ of life †.”

* 2 Tim. ii. 3.—1 Tim. vi. 12.

† Rev. ii. 10.

And indeed, all that I have now said is perfectly consonant to the inference which St. Paul himself deduces from this doctrine of the resurrection. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren," says the Apostle, "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

Idly. I am to take notice of the support and comfort which this great principle of our Christian faith affords to the mind of man, under the heaviest disappointments and most painful sufferings.

It would be a very needless undertaking to prove, "that man is born to sorrow, as the sparks fly upwards*." Every day bears its testimony to this melancholy truth; and sooner or later will make every man a convert to it. The nature of this world and all its occurrences, the constitution of the human mind, and the frame of our bodies, subject us to various and innumerable afflictions. Our hopes often terminate in disappointment; or, if they meet with gratification, the objects seldom answer to our wishes, and hardly ever fail to lose their relish during a length of possession. Our fears are often vain, and always productive of bitter inquietude. They fre-

* Job v. 7.

quently import distant evils by anticipation—evils which never may arrive—They multiply likewise and enlarge future ills, beyond their just number and real magnitude. And indeed, with regard to what are usually styled pleasures, they are generally purchased with difficulty, or accompanied with some uneasiness, or end in remorse and vexation of spirit.

But let us attend the couches of the sick, and what mortifying lessons may we learn from those, who, in the severity of their sufferings, appropriate to themselves the language of Job ! “ I am
“ made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I
“ lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night
“ be gone ? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day *.” These are very pitiable scenes of distress — distress ! which one day or other may become the portion of every one of us.—Shall we take a view of the most piercing of all afflictions ? then let us enter the houses of mourning, where death hath made irreparable breaches into family connections and comforts, where we shall hear the cries of parents bereaved of their children, or of children bewailing their departed parents. Now, is there

* Job vii. 3, 4.

any doctrine, or if there be, what is that doctrine, which can sustain the human mind amidst all the manifold difficulties, disappointments, and pressures of human life? What is that doctrine, which can inspire fortitude, patience, and resignation under sickness, pain, and dissolution? Whence are we to fetch those principles that can support us under the agonizing solemnity of parting with our expiring relatives and friends?—Yes: the glorious discovery of a resurrection to everlasting life and happiness. I say, that this blessed doctrine, duly believed, ever uppermost in our thoughts, and actuating all our behaviour, will lead us to regard the funeral removal of all that are near and dear to us, as only a temporary separation which *never* NEVER shall prevail any more, because “death shall then be swallowed up
“in victory.”

Hear the triumphant language of a most excellent prelate, long deceased*.

‘O transporting period! when God shall
‘graciously wipe away all tears from our eyes,
‘and sin and sorrow shall be no more! when this
“corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this
“mortal shall put on immortality,” and we shall
‘enter upon the possession of all that glory and

* Archbishop Tillotson.

‘felicity,

‘ felicity, which God hath promised, and our faith
 ‘ hath believed, and our hopes have raised us to
 ‘ the expectations of ! When we shall be eased
 ‘ of all our pains, and resolved of all our doubts,
 ‘ and be purged from all our sins, and be freed
 ‘ from all our fears, and be happy beyond all our
 ‘ hopes ; and have this happiness secured to us be-
 ‘ yond the power of time and change ! When
 ‘ we shall know God and other things without
 ‘ study, and love him and one another without
 ‘ measure, and serve and praise him without wea-
 ‘ riness, and obey his will without the least
 ‘ reluctance ; and shall still be more and more
 ‘ delighted in the knowing, and loving, and
 ‘ praising, and obeying of God to all eter-
 ‘ nity !’

But, as I have before noticed, this exquisite
 happiness is reserved for those only who lead vir-
 tuous and holy lives ; “ for without holiness no
 “ man can see the Lord *.” It is therefore highly
 necessary, that this consideration should sink deep
 into our breast, and influence every part of our
 conduct. If this doctrine be conscientiously ob-
 served by us, we may reasonably hope to die
 comfortably, and after death to rise gloriously.

* Heb. xii. 14.

Which that we may all do, God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed everlasting praise.

HEALTH, AN ALLEGORY:

In a LETTER to a LADY.

MADAM,

I Received your obliging favour ; and with the goddess, whom you mention with rapture, may be your constant friend and companion. Methinks I am not at all surpris'd, that Pagans and Poets have deified Health.

I think too they have judg'd mighty well in representing this imaginary deity as a female, to express thereby the superior charms of this divinity. Had I a talent for fable, I would sketch out for you an allegory upon this subject. I should probably begin my story after the following manner, or something like it.

Health is reported to be the daughter of Temperance, and born in the golden age. Some are of opinion that she was descended, on the male side, from Exercise. But, by the best lights I could ever obtain in a matter of such antiquity and obscurity, I am inclined to think that this account of her genealogy is spurious. For Temperance was not so properly her mother, as nurse or guardian, one who had the tuition of her infancy, and was afterwards advanced to a most important post, as shall hereafter be mentioned.

§

Whatever

HEALTH, AN ALLEGORY. 115

Whatever darkness, however, may attend her parental descent, yet all the annals agree in the following; that her birth was celebrated with great pomp and ceremony; for the Graces visited her in person, and each would have adopted her for their own. This beautiful young virgin, though highly accomplished, was never fond of public appearances; which you must own, Madam, would be strange self-denial in the pretty goddesses of our days. Her principal delight was in the fields and woods, where Flora dressed her with the rose and the lily; and Diana frequently made her a companion in her sports. A nymph, thus possessed of more than human accomplishments, was justly entitled to a throne; nor was it long before she was invested with the sceptre by the concurring voices and acclamations of the people. Her reign was long and prosperous, and her subjects were happy. Nor, indeed, could less be expected from a queen, that founded her government upon the unerring laws of nature, which were as obligatory upon herself as upon her people; nor could the royal authority itself dispense, at any time whatever, with a breach of those primary statutes.

Her first minister was Virtue, who had an unbounded ascendance over her mistress. Besides this premier favourite, there was another, who

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was almost a constant associate of the queen. The name of this pretty sylvan was Cheerfulness. She was generally apparelled in green, of a mild and composed aspect, liable to have her features sometimes brightened by a smile. Many other virgins joined the train of this princess, and were adjudged to be of British extraction. There was Innocence, dressed in white, with a curious blush of crimson on her cheeks; she was handed along by Prudence, who wore a good deal of solicitude in her countenance, and seemed to step with great caution. She was, indeed, an armed satellite; and had more of severity than sweetness in her brow. But there was a most beautiful form, that justly challenged a particular description; a lady, who so closely adhered to the white-robed fair, that it is said, they were never seen apart. This virgin's name was Peace. She had a most lovely serenity in her visage, and a softness not to be delineated by a human pen. The assistance of the imagination must here be called in, and the portrait wear an angel's face. Though she was highly admired by the gazing crowd, yet she seemed to borrow none of her happiness from the applauses and adoration of the multitude. It is further given out, that, fond as this lady was of the court of Health, she rarely makes her appearance in the courts and palaces of other monarchs;
and

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and the reason assigned is her inseparable attachment to the female above-mentioned, who was arrayed in a garment of spotless white.

In process of time, there arose a powerful enemy to the queen—Luxury, an absolute monarch, who proclaimed war against Health. The armies of the former were principally Asiatics, and more numerous than those of Xerxes, which drank up whole rivers as they marched, or than those of the Macedonian madman, who conquered all but himself. Yet, notwithstanding the number of the tyrant's forces, Health had never been subdued, if her subjects had not listened to overtures of peace from the enemy; which, as you shall hear by and by, paved the way for the dissolution of the queen's happy government.

Excess led the armies of Luxury into the field, and commanded the van; Sickness and Pain were posted in the centre; Poverty and Pride had the command of the wings; and Repentance and Death brought up the rear.

Health headed her own troops, and was supported by her two illustrious amazons, Resolution and Prudence. The latter drew up the forces with such matchless skill, that their corps were impenetrable by the enemy. Their helmets and coats of mail were tempered with so much art, that they were proof to the enemy's shot. Nor was

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the queen's army to be surpris'd at any time by a sudden invasion. For Prudence had erect-ed up and down several watch towers, whence the motions of the adverse party were easily descried.

The dispute was long and doubtful ; till at last, the enemy finding no success likely to ensue from open measures of hostility, had recourse to strata-gem. For, sending Pleasure as an ambassadress, to mediate between the two contending powers, this artful syren so insinuated herself into the favour of the queen's subjects, and sowed such discontent in their breast, that, being gradually won upon by her blandishments and corruptions, they at first began to murmur against the severity of the queen's discipline, and, by degrees relaxing of their allegiance, they at last revolted openly to the enemy.

Health being thus overpowered by her adver-sary, or rather deserted basely through the treachery of her own subjects, withdrew from earth to heaven, and was speedily enrolled among the divinities ; whence she still continues to impart her benefits to those distinguished few, who wisely regulate their lives by her golden precepts, and hold no correspondence with Luxury, or her par-tisans.

And

HEALTH, AN ALLEGORY. 119

And now, Madam, as I am a profest priest
of the goddess, you may depend upon my best
interest with her to shower down upon you
a double portion of her favours. For I am,

Madam,

Your most obedient humble servant.

ON HUSBANDRY.

Omnes homines, qui sese student præstare cæteris animalibus, summa ope niti decet, ne vitam silentio transeant, veluti pecora, quæ natura prona atque ventri obedientia finxit. SALL.

THIS world hath often been compared to a wide theatre, where every man hath a part allotted him to act ; and it highly becomes every man to acquit himself properly in that character which he personates ; that when he retires from the stage, there may be conferred upon him the desirable encomiums of a diligent actor, a faithful friend, and a generous patriot. What excuse then can be made for that portion of mankind who pass their days in a culpable indolence or in a criminal activity ; whose knowledge is circumscribed to a just taste in claret, and actions extend little further than to the drinking of it ! men, whose ambition rises no higher than to a pre-eminence in their horses and hounds ; and who experience only those sensual delights, which their dogs perhaps enjoy in a degree superior to themselves ? There are, indeed, several small trivial qualifications, which, when joined with greater, may occasionally render the possessor the more agreeable ; but which, if
once

once drawn out, and exposed to light by themselves, are incapable of exciting the least esteem; like particular shades in a picture, which, while they are connected with the main design, may be laudable decorations, but if once abstracted, appear inferior to the paintings of a sign-post.

What is a greater argument of a mean and ignoble spirit, than to dance life away in a perpetuated assembly, or to play away threescore years and ten at repeated games at cards? When persons of this character make their exit, they are as little regarded, after the curtain is dropped, as those *dramatis personæ* which are hired to fill up the retinue of the hero.

There are a vast number and variety in the provinces of life, insomuch that there is no excuse left for an ungenerous indolence. Though all men are not alike capable of acting in an exalted sphere, of personating the general or the statesman, yet every man is capacitated to act some part or another well. Gentlemen of estates can never be at a loss to employ their time; because to such a large field lies open, where they may expatiate with the greatest satisfaction to themselves, and usefulness to others. There are unnumbered pleasures, which a mere estate itself entitles a man to; and he who will be so just to himself, and good to others, as to lay hold on the happy opportunities

portunities that money offers, hath this peculiar privilege, that at the same time he is promoting the benefit of others, he is procuring to himself, by such acts of benevolence, the greatest happiness attainable in life.

And here I shall address myself to a particular advantage, which gentlemen, whose estates lie in land, may enjoy, I mean that of culture and improvement, which at once dilates and instructs the mind, makes constant accessions to the estate, confirms and invigorates the health, and is of diffusive service to the poorer part of the nation. To a man of a philosophical turn here are continually new scenes presenting themselves to the imagination, fresh wonders opening to curiosity, and a continued stream of pleasure ever pouring in upon the soul. The earth seems, as it were, in silent gratitude, amply to repay the industry bestowed upon her; while nature puts on all her gaudy dresses, and appears with a variety of beauties, at once to please and inform the mind, and at the same time to charm and gratify the senses. This employment, under proper regulations, is a theme worthy of a refined taste, and suited to a sublime genius; whence accordingly we find, that the greatest and the wisest men were frequently withdrawing themselves from affairs of state, to retire into the country, where we may observe them, in
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the most luxuriant style and passionate expressions, enlarging upon the rich profusion and satisfactory pleasures of the same.

The vegetable kingdom may be said to be in one continual bloom to a contemplative mind; and every gradual change, which nature introduces, exhibits a new subject for the employ of his thoughts. How delightful is it to survey the different growths, stages, and progressive successions of plants, trees, and fruits, from their first swelling and expanding into life, to their shooting into a slender youth, and thence terminating in a beautiful maturity!

What led me into the above train of thought, was a visit I lately paid to a friend of mine in the country; with whose character I shall beg leave to close this speculation.

Cornelius is a man of fifteen hundred pounds per annum. When he came to his estate, the net income thereof scarcely exceeded half its present value; but by a frugal and prudent conduct, he hath paid a large debt, with which his land had been encumbered during many years. He was always of a thoughtful and studious disposition; and, as men of this character are generally enemies to pomp and noise, so Cornelius was ever averse to public employments. He had arrived to such a knowledge of mankind, at an age
when

when men commonly but begin this study, as to know, that it required a greater degree of firmness and resolution to maintain an integrity amidst public corruption, than what his tender unexperienced youth could pretend to; the temptations in such departments being no less persuasive than they are numerous. The suspected hypocrisy of some, the apparent dishonesty of others, and the great folly of most, were to him powerful inducements to retirement; so far as such recess is agreeable to those unalterable ties and obligations which a man lies under, of being serviceable to his country. Yet this his retreat proceeded by no means from a ridiculous affectation, a sordid desire of ease, and a culpable disgust to business; but from a serious reflection upon the difficulties of filling public stations with honour; the unkind constructions which men are apt to put upon the best intentions; and the universal ingratitude which the most laudable measures are sure to meet with, if unattended with success. Ingratitude! that vice by which the most delicate minds are the most easily affected, as the tenderest constitutions are the soonest indisposed by the inclemency of the weather.

A shallow insight into mankind may generate pride, and a supercilious behaviour; but a profound philosopher hath too much knowledge to

sin, envious, and ill-natured. The confessions of an unbounded understanding, are honesty, generosity, and love. Thus the austerity of Cornelius's virtue is so smoothed by the sweetness of his disposition, improved by his knowledge; that his conversation is never less obliging and instructive; and so judiciously are good sense and a genteel behaviour interwoven together, that it is difficult to determine, in this happy composition, which is most predominant, the acute philosopher, or the fine gentleman.

With these qualifications my friend is retired to the country. The method of passing his time is amidst his books in the morning; and in the afternoon his hours are devoted to friendship or the surveying of his estate. It is highly pleasing to observe with what a mixture of civility and respect the tenants salute their lord, the most inferior of them appearing rather as a species of friends than dependants. He hath so justly calculated the product of the land they occupy, as to allow the husbandmen the supplies for the maintenance of their families, and the tenants are so thoroughly acquainted with the greatness of their master's soul, as to be so sensible, that the improvements, which they make on his estates, will never prove a temptation to him to raise their rents, without allowing them a proper

proper rewards for their industry. By these means, there is not a spot of ground uncultivated. The generosity of Cornelius's mind shines forth in the plenty of his tenants, and the wisdom of his conduct is conspicuous in the carriage of his servants; for, as hath already been intimated, he hath so prudently blended love and respect in the minds of his tenants, that the latter restrains the former from all excursions into an indecent and nauseous familiarity.

Before I conclude this paper, I must beg the reader's attention to the relating of a fact, which I was informed of by the farmer immediately concerned. A few days ago, this honest husbandman was waiting upon my friend, to discharge a part of his year's rent. Upon the entrance of Ruricolus into the room, Cornelius observed a settled melancholy in his countenance; and, suspecting the cause thereof, prevented the farmer's complaints, by asking him, whether he had made the same gain this year of his acres as formerly? To which the countryman replied, that the violence of the winds last autumn, and the sudden storms of snow towards the conclusion of the winter, had scattered such large quantities of his corn, and destroyed such a number of his sheep, that, were it not for a little money which he had laid up, he could not have supported the severity of the shock. Corne-
lius

lius knowing the truth of the story, and the diligence of the husbandman, generously remitted him half his year's rent.

By these measures Cornelius enjoys those ecstatic pleasures which none but minds exaltedly virtuous are capable of relishing. He hath a secret lodged within him for serenity and peace against all inclemency of weather and intemperature of the seasons. The rude blasts of the east wind teem with as many blessings as the most fertile zephyrs; inasmuch as the former enable him to taste the fruits of the latter in their truest perfection, by furnishing him with opportunities of relieving unfortunate industry and distressed virtue; by placing it in his power to answer the necessitous petition of the forlorn widow, and the moving cries of the hungry orphan!

Go on, great man!—The heavens shall ever smile on the largeness of thy soul, and shed their most friendly influences upon thee, thy family, thy lands, thy cattle! Thus shall thy days never know interruption of happiness, and thy end shall be crowned with the applause of thy Maker.

O N Z E A L.

*Subito non vultus, non color unus,
Non comptæ mansere comæ, sed pectus anhelum,
Et rabie fera corda tument.* VIRG.

THERE never was a word more mistaken than Zeal. To this idol have been sacrificed thousands and ten thousands. It delights and sports itself in human victims, like Moloch. As an angel of darkness, it deals murders, plagues, and famine around; and with the venomous malignity of a basilisk, kills whatever it looks upon.

This monster hath turned the most fertile plains into barren wildernesses, depopulated large and mighty cities, and totally effaced the image of the Creator through several parts of the eastern world. Zeal, abstracted from charity, is the wild enthusiasm of a distempered brain, or the infernal rage of an abandoned hypocrite.

While I was ruminating on this subject, I fell asleep, and to the above reflections I attribute the following vision:—

Methought I was on a sudden transported into a distant country, the air of which was very thick and heavy, so that the whole region appeared to be involved in a large cloud. I had not been
there

there long, before a beautiful being met me, and accosted me with the question, "How I came thither?" My reply hath escaped my memory. But my fair guide, without further interrogations, led me towards a large structure, which, she informed me, was the temple of Zeal.

As we passed along, we took notice of vast armies, which encompassed us on all sides. The colour of their cloaths was the deepest scarlet that I had ever beheld. Their swords, which were always drawn, were reeking with the blood of those whom they had encountered.

Thus we advanced towards the middle of the country. As we drew nearer to the temple, the air grew so thick, and the whole atmosphere was so dark, that the building seemed entirely situated in the very shades of night. The building was illuminated with a small taper, which cast an additional gloom and horror around the place. Instead of foliages, and other decorations, usual at the entrance of large edifices, there were carved the figures of human skulls, and other bones; so that the external ornaments resembled the appearances of a sepulchre. At the further end of the temple, we descried the female to whom it belonged. She was seated upon a throne of ebony, and arrayed in deep mourning. Her face was very pale, and much emaciated, occasioned by

long vigils, and unremitted industry in her attention to her engagements. Her eyes and hands were lifted upwards, and she seemed to be actuated by the most fervent devotion. On her right hand stood Superstition, drest in the habit of a nun; and was her prime minister of state, from whom she received all her intelligence. On her left appeared a hideous phantom, called Death; in one hand was lightning, and in the other a scythe.

After having taken a sufficient survey of this scene of terrors, I desired my leader to conduct me back, with which request she immediately complied; and entertained me, as we passed along, with suitable reflections upon what I had seen. I was very desirous to know the lady by whom I had been so highly obliged, when a fortunate incident occurred, which introduced me into the whole secret.

There advanced towards us a tribe of nymphs, whose charms were too many and too great for the description of the pen; each held in her hand a golden harp. Their eyes were strong and sparkling, and at the same time tempered with a peculiar softness. Their hair flowed upon their shoulders in graceful ringlets; and when they spoke, music issued from their tongues. No sooner had their president, who was the goddess Harmony, attended by the liberal arts and sciences, paid her respects

respects to my conductor, than she immediately threw off her disguise ; when, lo ! all on a sudden, the mists and clouds were dispelled ; the day broke in upon us, and the sun shone in its meridian glory. Whereupon I turned myself, to notice what was become of the scene, which I had so lately beheld ; when, to my great surprise and pleasure, the spot where the temple stood was converted into a verdant hill, covered with flocks of sheep, whose fleeces emulated the whiteness of snow ; while the plains below were beautifully divided into regular inclosures, and stocked with vast herds of cattle. Instead of the cries of the miserable, our ears were entertained with the bleatings of sheep, the lowings of oxen, the sweet murmurs of rivulets, and the melodious warblings of nightingales ! I was then turning towards my guide, who instantly vanished from my sight ; but by the appellation which the nymphs gave her, I learnt that she was the goddess Liberty, the Genius of Great Britain !

D E T R A C T I O N,

A V I S I O N.

Visceribus miserorum et sanguine vescitur atro.

VIRG.

SUPERIOR excellence is the general mark for calumny; and envy is usually led to asperse what it cannot imitate. A little mind is scandalized at the pre-eminence of its neighbour, and endeavours to depreciate the virtues which it cannot attain to. Thus the distempered eye is impatient of prevailing brightness; and, by attempting to observe the lucid object, inadvertently betrays its own weakness. Pride is the fruitful parent of detraction; and it is the unjust estimate which men set upon themselves, that generates in their minds this ridiculous contempt of greater worth. Persons of this unhappy complexion regard all praises conferred upon another as derogatory from their own value. The arrows of the backbiter are generally shot in the night; and the most unspotted innocence is the game of this infernal destroyer. The heads of his darts are imbrued in poison; and it too frequently happens, that a small wound proves mortal to the injured. But to drop for the present these figurative expressions, I would only observe, that it is pity a well-regulated

regulated society cannot more effectually curb this impious licentiousness of those sons of darkness. If a wretch, necessitated by the cries of a starving family to seek illegal supplies of bread, shall make an open attack upon me, the constitution of the realm consigns such a pitiable malefactor to infamy and death. And shall this miserable object of compassion prove the victim of my resentment, while the backbiter may, with impunity, revel in the excesses of his iniquity, and boast defiance to all laws? As this is a topic, however, which hath been descanted on by a variety of pens, I shall endeavour to enliven it with the air of novelty, by throwing my further sentiments into the form of a vision.

I found myself, during the slumbers of the night, in a very extensive region, which was subject to the jurisdiction of a fury, named Detraction. The fields were wild, and carried not the least appearance of cultivation. The tops of the hills were covered with snow; and the whole country seemed to mourn the inclement severity of one eternal winter. Instead of the verdure of a pleasing herbage, there sprang up to sight hemlock, aconite, and other baneful plants. The woods were the retreats of serpents; while on the boughs were perched the birds of night, brooding in doleful silence.

In the middle of the plain was a bleak mountain, where I discovered a group of figures, which I presently made up to. On the summit presented the fury of the place. There was a peculiar deformity attending her person. Her eyes were galled and inflamed; her visage was swollen and terrible; and from her mouth proceeded a two-edged sword. A blasted oak was the throne which she sat on; her food was the flesh of vipers, and her drink gall and vinegar.

At a little distance from her I observed Ignorance talking loud in his own applause; Pride strutting upon his tiptoes; Conceit practising at a mirror; and Envy, like a vulture, preying upon herself.

The multitudes who paid their addresses to this fury were a composition of all nations and professions, of different characters, and various capacities. There was the mechanic, the tradesman, the scholar; but the most zealous votaries consisted principally of old maids, antiquated batchelors, discarded courtiers, and the like. Each strove to ingratiate himself with the fury, by sacrificing the most valuable of his friends; nor could proximity of blood move compassion, or plead exemption from being victims to her insatiable passion. Some addressed this infernal Moloch with the very fruits of their bodies, while others were triumphantly

phantly chanting forth the extent of her power, and expatiating on the numbers of her conquests. At this incident arose in my breast all the tender sentiments of humanity that I had ever cultivated; and I began to blame my criminal curiosity, which had prompted me to ascend the mountain. But in a few minutes the whole scene was very agreeably reversed. For, towards the southern boundaries, I observed the clouds parting, the sky purpling, and the sun breaking forth in all its glory. When immediately there appeared marching towards us Good-nature, in all her pomp and splendor; arrayed like a sylvan nymph, and blooming with unstudied graces. She was of a fair and ruddy complexion, which received additional beauty from the frequent smiles that she threw into her countenance. On her right hand shone Good Sense, with much majesty and diffidence in her mien. She was an essential attendant on the young lady, who never appeared to such advantage, as when she was under her more immediate direction. On her left was Generosity, carrying a heart in her hand. The next that presented, was Modesty, with her eyes fixed on the ground, and her cheeks spread with roses. Then followed a train of beauties, who, by the unaffected charms of their persons, made me desirous of a nearer inspection. Upon a close approach I

discovered that they were a tribe of British ladies, who were always fond of appearing in the retinue of the goddess, from whose indulgent smiles they received an accessional lustre to their charms. I then turned my eyes towards the monsters I have above described. The principal of which turned pale, and fell down in a swoon from her throne. Pride shrunk into a shade; Envy fell prostrate and bit the ground; while Ignorance vanished like a morning cloud before the rising sun. As the goddess drew near, the whole collection of fiends disappeared. The basilisk skulked into the glade, and the oak on which the fury was seated budded forth afresh, where, ere the goddess walked, the flowers sprang up spontaneous at her feet. The trees, surprised with new-born life, displayed the enamelled blossom. The tender roe was seen bounding over the mountains, and the little lamb sporting on the hills. Instead of the briar and the thorn, there shot forth the myrtle and every odoriferous shrub. The voice of the turtle was heard in the groves, and the dales resounded with the melodious harmony of the nightingale. In a word, the whole region confessed the happy influences of the deity, and charmed in all the genial softness of the spring.

O N M A R R I A G E.

*Felices ter et amplius,**Quos irrupta tenet copula; nec malis**Divulsus querimoniis,**Supremâ citius solvet amor die.*

HOR.

SOME days ago I received an account of the marriage of a friend. When an occurrence of this nature casts up, the mind is insensibly betrayed into little animadversions on such a subject. This was particularly my case the night after I had heard of the nuptials. For, after having mused a while, I fell into an easy slumber, when fancy presented to my view a spacious temple, consecrated to Hymen, the god of marriage.

At a little distance from me I observed a giddy crowd of both sexes, who were making to the temple, in order to celebrate with each other the ceremony of the god. There was shuffled in among them a dæmon, whose form was so peculiar, and whose sway over the multitude so universal, that I shall here give my reader a description of him.

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The name of this fury was Lust. In the upper part of his body he carried the likeness of a human figure; from his middle downwards he bore the resemblance of a goat: his eyes were turgid, sparkling, and inflamed; his complexion was very irregular, attended with sudden transitions from a sanguine red to a livid paleness; his whole system was frequently agitated with violence by the impetuosity of ungoverned passion. His immediate follower was Distaste, with a sickly countenance and supercilious eye. The next, Remorse, with a hat flapped over his face, and a worm gnawing his vitals. I was greatly shocked at those monstrous appearances; and the more so, when I observed how readily my fellow creatures gave into the hateful suggestions of the dæmon. But my surprise was abated on a nearer approach; for I discovered that his breath was of such a malignant influence, as to intoxicate, and deprive of reason, all those unhappy persons, who had advanced within the reach of its contagion.

I was in so great a consternation at what I had seen, that I hesitated for a while whether I should enter into conversation with those blithe adventurers, who had declared themselves to be votaries of the temple. In the midst of my suspense, there came towards us a grave old gentleman, of a steady and composed aspect, whose name was
Thought.

Thought. He was one of the principal agents belonging to the sanctuary; and so high in the god's esteem, that Hymen was never, or but rarely, known to give his benediction, at the conclusion of the ceremony, to any couple, who had not been ushered into his presence by this venerable officer. Upon his joining the company, to the majority of whom I found he was a perfect stranger, there were expressed an universal uneasiness and discontent; and many of them industriously avoided all conversation with him. But it is remarkable, that all those who had thus imprudently turned their backs upon him, were laid hold of, in their return from the temple, by one or both of the melancholy attendants of the dæmon.

Hymen now appeared, marching with great dignity and state. The first in the procession was Love, in the form of a Cupid, who was continually practising a thousand little arts and graces to draw upon him the smiles of the god; and, by the tender regards which he manifested to the child, it was plain that he was a great favourite.

Hymen followed, holding in his hand a flaming torch, which shone with the brighter lustre the longer it burned. He was supported by Virtue, a lady of the most engaging mien I had ever beheld. She was clothed with a white resplendent

fulgent garment, having her head encircled with glory.

The next attendant was Beauty, arrayed in the most gorgeous apparel, and full of herself almost to distraction. She was handed along by Youth, a gay stripling, wearing a chaplet of flowers upon his head, and wings on his shoulders.

Then was discovered to view Money, an old man, meanly attired. His eyes were the eyes of a hawk, and the nails of his fingers were curved, pointing inwards like the talons of a raven. He was noisy, impudent, and presuming.

The retinue was brought up by Fancy, a lady ever varying her features and her dress; and, what methought was very extraordinary, she charmed under every appearance.

The deity, immediately on his entrance into the temple, ascended his throne, and sat with his head gently reclined on Virtue's bosom. Love and Beauty took their stations on the right hand; and on the left were disposed Money and Fancy.

The god quickly proceeded to the celebration of the nuptial rites; but there was such a confused sound of sighs and laughter, that I could not give the attention which was requisite, in order to furnish an account of the several circumstances which occurred. I noticed only, that many of
the

the matches were very unequal; infomuch, that Hymen joined the respective couples with reluctance, and but half consented to his own institution.

After the ceremony was over, silence was proclaimed in the temple, for the god was determined to decide a contest, which had been of long standing between the personages who attended about the altar. Upon this declaration the multitude divided; and, according to the various impulses of their passions, they took the respective parts of the several competitors. The young ranked themselves on the right side of the throne; while those of more advanced years posted themselves behind the disputants on the left.

Love began with entering a complaint against Money, setting forth that his antagonist had seduced such large numbers to his party, that as to himself his interest visibly declined every day, to the great prejudice of that state, in which the god had always designed him the pre-eminence. While he was pursuing his argument with great warmth, Poverty stepped out from amidst the crowd, and stared the young plaintiff full in the face; who was so frightened at his rueful countenance, that he fluttered his pinions in order for flight. At which period Money rose up, and addressed the judge, with shewing the necessity of
his

his presence for making the married state as replete with happiness, as it was originally intended by its institutor; with other arguments, which, if they had been delivered with the same modesty as force, could not have failed to create many converts to his side. This his speech was followed with a thunder of applause from the company behind him. Upon which incident the old man began to triumph, and re-inforce his allegations; when in the violence of his emotions his coat flew open, and betrayed to sight Cares, in the form of serpents, hanging at his breast. Hereupon Love stood up, and would fain have re-assumed his cause. But Hymen, who well knew the importance of their joint presence to render matrimonial life comfortable, ended the controversy, by proposing the union of their families; to which proposition they cheerfully accorded. No sooner were their hands joined; as the signal of their acceding to the terms of the god, than Love immediately lighted up new smiles in his face, and appeared infinitely more engaging than before. Yet the more surprising change was wrought upon Money, whose talons fell off like scales from his fingers; his eyes lost all their former rapacious avidity; and the harsh lineaments of his countenance at once softened into all the sweetness of humanity. Love approached,

hed, and gently stroking the old man's
 n, stilled the hissing of the serpents, and af-
 d the severity of his pain. The contest
 ; thus amicably adjusted, Beauty next ad-
 ed, and, after many airs of affectation, put on
 ighishing look, and lisped out a mournful
 sation against Money (as Love had done
 e) intimating also his usurpation over her,
 the like. Scarcely had she uttered three sen-
 es before there made towards her a grisly
 t. His hair was covered with a hoar-frost,
 ace plowed with furrows, and from his eyes
 : distilled a scalding rheum. When the
 ig lady thus saw Age hobbling towards her,
 appeared in all the agonies of thought, the
 : left her cheeks, and she sunk down in a
 on. Hymen understanding the temper of the
 that she was proud and imperious, fond of
 urning, but at the same time incapable of
 ag with propriety, divested her of a large
 e of power, by disposing of her frontier towns
 fancy; who now acts with unlimited autho-
 , nor admits any person to pay his addresses
 he gay virgin, without a prior interview with
 elf.

T H E
HISTORY OF AN INN-KEEPER
IN NORMANDY.

Quanquam animus meminisse horret.

VIRG.

WHEN a man narrowly scrutinises into his own heart; how little satisfaction arises from such an inspection! His goodness many times extends no further than to languid and impotent resolutions; whence he hath the mortification to see, that his virtue is daily perishing in its blossoms; while vice deeply roots itself in the corruption of his nature, derives additional strength from the luxuriance of the soil, and is hourly making bold advances to maturity. At the same time that prepossessions and prejudices enthrall his mind, they likewise enervate the powers of exertion, and thereby preclude to the captive all prospect of enlargement. Passions are clamorous, temptations are numerous, and reason too frequently is of insufficient force to silence the former,

former, and to repel the latter. Thus his breast resembles a chaos, where discord, darkness, and confusion maintain their empire, and triumph over the boasted authority of man. Disappointed and displeased with the picture which his own bosom exhibits of himself, he is naturally led to enquire into the cause of this involuntary deformity. Some writers have endeavoured to solve all difficulties, by affirming, that the creation of such a strange compound as man was necessary, to preserve a due scale and gradation of beings. Others ascribe all our errors and defects to the Fall, and thereby impute to the first parents of mankind the moral evil discoverable in the species. But, without entering upon a discussion of these subjects, I would observe, that the human mind, in its present state, wears the appearance of an ancient superb structure, which hath formerly been injured and defaced by hostile injury. There still remain strong marks of its primitive grandeur, although several of its noblest apartments are so miserably maimed and neglected, that they are now become, as it were, “an heritage for the dragons of the wilderness.”

It is a common observation, that neither the best of men are exempted from faults and follies, nor the worst altogether destitute of worth and virtue; but sometimes there is such a mixture of

good and bad qualities, so great a contrariety both of sentiment and conduct in the same individual, that when we ourselves sit upon the trial of such a character, we are even constrained to suspend our sentence; and our judgment is not only embarrassed by the interspersion of slighter crimes, but it is also frequently perplexed and obstructed in its decisions, when actions of the blackest turpitude have been perpetrated by men whose general behaviour hath corresponded to the strictest rules of virtue and benevolence. History, sacred and profane, furnishes us with striking instances of the brightest excellencies, and the foulest blemishes, concentrated in the same person. Oftentimes that predominant passion, which constitutes the very heroism of goodness, shall aggravate every feature of vice, if once it be enlisted under the banner of wickedness. That natural warmth of St. Peter's temper, which rendered his zeal for his injured master so conspicuous, betrayed him into the most horrid oaths and execrations. But there is no necessity of a recourse to such distant examples; we shall find sufficient scope for reflection upon topics of this nature amidst the occurrences of our own times. Nor will the subsequent story be a bad comment upon the hints already advanced, or too faint an illustration of the deplorable consequences which now and then

then follow upon an unlimited indulgence even of the best of human passions.

An inn-keeper, at a town in Normandy, had eight children. His wife, whom he loved with the utmost tenderness, died of a fever, after fourteen years cohabitation. He was inconsolable for a while; but at length he emerged from his grief, and transferred all his affection to the fruits of his marriage-bed. The income arising from the profits of his business was an incompetent maintenance for his family. Hence several of his sons and daughters, when they had attained to proper age, quitted their father's house, and entered into servitude. So strong was the Inn-holder's attachment to his children, that he regarded their departure in the light of a temporary banishment. However, there yet remained at home his eldest and his youngest son, who practised every filial duty, to supply the deficiency of his absent comforts. Prior to this period, commenced a war between France and Great Britain; in the progress whereof the French compelled into their service a multitude of young fellows, who were averse to the profession of arms. It unhappily fell out, that the Inn-keeper's youngest boy, a lad about sixteen years of age, was seized upon by a recruiting party, and hurried into Flanders. The distress

of the poor Inn-keeper at this melancholy incident, would probably have been insupportable, if his brother, who was the minister of the parish, had not used every argument, which reason and religion suggested, to alleviate the pangs of the bereaved parent. But although a course of time had assuaged the severity of his sufferings, yet his sorrows were occasionally quickened by the piteous tales the youth transmitted to him, of the many hardships he underwent abroad ; by repeated applications of this necessitous son for money, and by the inability of the father to gratify the pressing requests of a starving child.

After some years were elapsed, there rode an officer into the yard of the inn, who, alighting from his horse, called aloud for the Landlord. The master of the house, observing that his guest, by his apparel, was a man of rank, approached him with deference ; at which time the Officer, fixing his eyes steadfastly upon his host, acquainted him, that he was just then arrived from Tournay, and had been desired to inform him of his son's health. The Landlord's fond heart bounded at the mention of a person so exceedingly dear to him, and he was urgent with the gentleman to perpetuate his conversation upon this engaging theme. But the Soldier replied, that he was necessitated to pay a few visits in the town, and would take a more favourable

avourable opportunity to satisfy every enquiry of his host.

About ten o'clock at night the gentleman returned to his inn, and told the Landlord, that he had invited several friends to dinner the next day; wherefore he directed a plentiful and elegant entertainment to be provided. At this protracted stay of his guest, the Inn-holder secretly rejoiced, hoping thereby to hear many particulars about his boy in the Netherlands. The Officer complaining of fatigue, and desiring to be conducted to his bedchamber, the man of the house caught up a candle, and lighted him to his apartment. No sooner were they both entered, than the gentleman drew a purse of gold from his pocket, and gave it to the Landlord, with a charge to take care of so valuable a deposit. Then, wishing him a good night, and reminding him of the morrow's engagements, he shut the door, and hastened into bed.

The following day the Abbé called upon his brother, and, with great complacency in his countenance, enquired after the Officer's health. The Inn-keeper told him, that the Officer was well, and had set out early in the morning on his return to the army. "It is impossible," replied the Abbé, with a smile; "that very Officer will most assuredly dine with you to-day, and give such

“ an account of your son, as must be productive
 “ to you of a degree of joy, very little inferior
 “ to rapture.” The Landlord was astonished at
 these mysterious words, and asked his brother, if
 he was formerly acquainted with the gentleman?
 To which the clergyman made answer in the af-
 firmative. “ Who is he?” said the Inn-keeper,
 with great emotion. “ The whole secret,” re-
 turned the Abbé, “ shall be revealed to you at
 “ dinner.” Hereupon the Inn-holder appeared
 extremely agitated, and peremptorily asserted the
 departure of his guest at break of day. “ Indeed
 “ it cannot be so,” replied the Priest. “ There
 “ is a happiness in reserve for you, my dear bro-
 “ ther, which my heart struggles to disclose;
 “ but the obligations I am under of secrecy will
 “ not permit me to unfold this interesting rid-
 “ dle.”

The master of the inn, whose face abundantly
 bespoke the perturbations of his breast, stared upon
 the Minister with a peculiar wildness in his eyes,
 and seemed entirely deprived of all power of ut-
 terance. “ Ah! my brother,” cried the Abbé,
 “ this is too, too much!—I cannot any longer
 “ keep you in this painful state of suspense. I
 “ beseech you to recollect the features of the
 “ military gentleman. Pray tell me, if you can-
 “ not trace out the lineaments of your darling
 “ son,

“son, under the badge of distinguished merit?” This eclaircissement had nearly proved fatal to the Landlord, who turned pale, trembled in every joint, and immediately sunk down in a swoon. The aged Churchman blamed himself for the temerity of his proceedings, and wished, a thousand times, that he had suppressed this affecting part of his narrative. But, since he could not retract his story, he cherished hopes, that a fuller explanation of every circumstance might deliver his brother’s mind from this distraction of contending passions ; wherefore, when the unhappy man was recovered from his fits, the Minister tenderly entreated him to compose the turbulence of his thoughts ; and further informed him, that his son, by a late signal display of valour, had been rewarded with a hundred louis-d’ors, and a lieutenancy—That the dear youth, noticing the officious assiduity of his father, presently inferred, from thence, his parent’s ignorance of him, now disguised, as it were, by his improved stature, and the superiority of his attire—That, pleased with this uncommon adventure, he had apprized his friends thereof, and appointed them to dine with him, that they might share the joys of the family, upon his discovery of himself—To all which the Abbé subjoined, that this worthy and amiable child had brought his indigent father a purse of

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money,

money, to obviate his present necessities, and to prevent future anxieties.

Scarce had the uncle mentioned this superlative instance of filial goodness, before the Inn-keeper dropped to the ground, writhed with violent convulsions; while the Ecclesiastic looked with inconceivable surprise upon the servants, who stood speechless round their seemingly dying master. Amid these scenes of confusion the maid recollected, that there was a vial of hartshorn drops in a closet pertaining to the bedchamber where the officer had lain the preceding night. As she was hastening up stairs for the medicine, she was pursued by the Minister, who endeavoured to arrest her in her flight, that he might learn from her, if it were possible, the true cause of all these strange and formidable occurrences.

With thoughts more disturbed and embroiled than the stormy deep, he entered the chamber; where, finding that his strength and spirits were hastily departing from him, he threw himself upon a couch, which was accidentally at hand. After he had continued a few minutes in this fainting state, he opened his eyes, and thought that he saw something like a human form lying under the bed.

The figure powerfully attracted his sight for a while. But when the Abbé had gazed long enough

to

to ascertain the reality of the object, he started up from his recumbent posture, and, collecting all his shattered powers into one effort, eagerly dragged the body from its concealment. To his inexpressible consternation, horror, and anguish, the mangled corpse proved to be the remains of the military stranger. The pious clergyman, penetrated through his very soul at this shocking spectacle, fetched a deep groan, and instantly fell dead upon his murdered nephew.

By this time the Inn-keeper was restored from those dreadful contortions which had threatened his speedy dissolution. Raising himself out of the chair in which his domestics had seated him, he desired to be taken before a magistrate, to whom he confessed every particular of this bloody tragedy. It seemed that the eldest son was the first who proposed the destruction of the Officer. The father heard the overture with detestation; but the young man, having bound himself in a joint bond with his father for the payment of a large sum of money, and hourly expecting his parent and himself to be thrown into a jail, urged the necessity of making the Soldier's purse their own property, as the only expedient to secure themselves from the misery of confinement. The father warmly remonstrated against such impious measures; and likewise observed, that the guilt thereof

thereof would be highly inflamed by the confidence which his guest had reposed in him. The son intimated that he thought it cruel usage to be made subject to the penalties of a bond, for which he had received no pecuniary consideration; and which he had entered into, upon no other motive, than the preservation of his father from the resentment of his creditors. The parent bewailed their complicated misfortunes; but persisted in suffering the utmost extremities, rather than embue their hands in blood. When the young fellow noticed, that his arguments made no impression, he then artfully enumerated the sore afflictions which his youngest brother endured in Flanders, from cold, penury, and toil. Nor did he fail to insinuate, that now an occasion presented itself of succouring the wretched youth, who was daily surrounded with famine, disease, and death. The pitiable father burst into a torrent of tears, and hastily said, "Whatever we are to do, let us do it immediately."

Thus the poor lacerated heart, although it had resolutely maintained its ground against the piercing solicitations of want, the approaching terrors of a prison, and the importunate clamours of an undone child, nevertheless fell a sudden sacrifice to the inordinate transports of parental affection.

ON THE THIRTEENTH PSALM.

Quid purè tranquillet.

HOR.

ALTHOUGH many and various are the pursuits of mankind after happiness, yet the greatest felicity is a constant sense of the divine favour. The pleasures which arise to the mind from a pre-eminence of birth, station, and fortune are of a foreign and extrinsic nature. Hence we daily see multitudes possessed of these benefits, who are utter strangers to solid and permanent satisfactions. But the good man, however destitute of those incidental advantages, hath nevertheless an inexhaustible source of comfort within himself. When he quits the crowd, and descends into his breast, he is sure of meeting with the best of company there—God, and his own heart: while the consciousness of his integrity, and the approbation of his Maker, furnish him with a perpetual feast.

Here, methinks, we cannot but pause a while, to reflect with gratitude upon the beneficence of our Creator, who hath thus, as it were, annihilated all invidious distinctions among mankind; and either hath placed the descendants of Adam

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upon a level in point of happiness, or lodged the means thereof within the reach of every man. It is not in the power of every individual to be rich and great in the world; but it is much in the power of every individual to attain a happiness infinitely superior to the joys which wealth and grandeur can bestow. Wherefore, let not the poor cottager complain, that all his labour is expended upon procuring to himself nothing more than the mere necessities of life. Such slender acquisitions are truly valuable and weighty, upon condition that he improves his existence to those purposes for which it was graciously given to him. If the indigent part of the species did but carefully consider, that to be good is to be happy; and that virtue and religion are accommodated to every situation and capacity, they would see abundant cause for thankfulness, even amid those scenes of servitude and toil, which now, perhaps, occasion envy, discontent, and murmur.

That frequent intercourses with the Supreme Being constitute the utmost happiness of man, is a proposition which stands in no need of proof from philosophical inquiries, refined argumentations, and laboured inferences. A very restricted understanding can comprehend this important truth. An arrant peasant, without previous information, is fully aware of the vast emoluments which ac-
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ON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM. 157

crue from an intimacy with an earthly monarch. What then must be those exalted privileges, which redound from the favour and friendship of the Almighty Sovereign of the universe !

But I shall close this subject with the opinion of the royal Psalmist upon it ; who discovers the high sense he entertained of the divine presence, by that bitterness, with which he bewails the interruption of it *.

ON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM

Quo te cœlestis Sapientia duceret, ires. HOR.

IN a late paper I observed, that the highest happiness of intellectual creatures consisted in a perpetual intercourse with Almighty God. But, to prevent mistakes, it may be incumbent upon us to enquire, what is the genuine test and proof of this divine communion. Our blessed Saviour hath resolved this important question—
“ Ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” And again, “ If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him.” Whence it follows, that if our

* See a version of the 13th Psalm, inserted among the Poetry, in vol. i. p. 113.

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actions be not suitable to the laws of God, all our pretences, warmth, and transports, are no better than the artifices of hypocrisy, the impositions of fanaticism, or the delusions of the grand enemy of mankind.

On the other hand, we are not to be discouraged at incidental absences, and dejections of spirits, when we are engaged in sacred duties.

Man is a composition of soul and body; and, during their union here, the former will be often interrupted in her religious performances by the diseases and imperfections of her associate.

Inattention, languors, and dejections, many times proceed from a temporary indisposition of the animal œconomy. A relaxation of the nervous system, an inequality in the circulation of the blood, and more especially a depravity of the juices (as the physicians term it) will have a powerful and surprising influence upon the mental faculties. I speak this in pity to multitudes, because I daily see pious and worthy persons afflicting themselves beyond measure, through the ignorance of this weighty truth. Besides, they would do well to recollect those gracious allowances, which our compassionate Saviour hath made upon record, for the omissions, frailties, and defaults of human nature. Even his disciples, who accompanied him into the garden the night preceding

ON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM. 159

preceding his crucifixion, could not repress unseasonable slumbers. It is also very observable, that the mild reprehensions of our Lord upon this occasion, suggested at the same time a tender apology for their misbehaviour.

Prayer and meditation have a direct tendency to keep open the communication between the Supreme Being and the soul of man. But the public worship of God hath the positive promise of his more immediate presence. What then shall we say to those, who use a thousand little pitiful subterfuges to justify their absence from the house of prayer? I had lately an opportunity of introducing the sentiments and example of the royal Psalmist. With my reader's permission, I will recommend to him another of David's compositions, where he will find this subject remarkably illustrated. I mean the forty-second Psalm; in the beginning whereof the author appears mightily solicitous to express the vehemence of his desire to approach again the ordinances of the sanctuary. The allusion, there mentioned, is of stronger import than what, perhaps, is generally imagined. It may be necessary to notice, that when a deer is closely pursued by the hunters, he takes soil, as it is called, that is, he speeds into the water. This is commonly his dernier resort; wherefore he makes the most powerful effort to accomplish

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accomplish his purposes. During such resolution, the natural timidity of his temper yields to a sudden ferocity, which would very much endanger man or horse, that accidentally obstructed his course.

In the next place, the Psalmist pathetically denotes the severity of his sorrows, while the Pagans upbraid him with the inutility of his faith and confidence in the true God. But, conscious of the superiority of his religion, he instances to himself that happiness, which resulted from his attendance upon the public worship; and takes occasion, from those prior comforts, to hold up his soul under present sufferings; more particularly under his fore distress of banishment from the temple of God. He not only expostulates with his own heart for its diffidence and fears; but he even reproaches his breast for its inquietude and despondence; because at that very period he experienced the sense of God's favour.

He likewise calls to mind past mercies, and the signal deliverances which God had wrought for him, at a time when he had as little encouragement to expect the interposition of the Deity, as amidst those troubles which induced him to pen this psalm. Then he concludes with a striking repetition of a former soliloquy, and of his purposed reliance upon God in all future difficulties
that

ON THE FORTY-SECOND PSALM. 161

that might befall him. Thus the struggle terminates, and the religious monarch goes off triumphant.

The passages which relate to the contumelious invectives of the heathen, are omitted in the subsequent version *, that the psalm may be more extensively applicable to every afflicted individual.

* See it in vol. i. page 114, et seq.

E X T R A C T S

F R O M

DR. COTTON'S LETTERS.

I Notice no complainings in your letter. Hence I hope you have attained resolution to pursue your plan without fluctuating. This unstable disposition is, perhaps, little inferior even to a state of real pain, mitigated one hour by false hopes, and exasperated another by false fears; but when a man is once determined, and invariably pursues the scheme he has laid down, then follow, as in a chain, satisfaction, tranquillity, and happiness.

Adieu, my dear friend; and number me among those who most esteem and love you.

AFTER all, dear Doctor, this dissatisfaction is very wrong; the world is a drama, and we must not expect to be all heroes and kings—There must be a subordination of characters; and if you and I are appointed candle-snuffers, we must take care to execute our province as well as we can.

can. I have said candle-snuffers, as bearing some allusion to our profession ; for you know we trim the wick of life. Indeed we sometimes snuff the candle out, and, what is worse, cannot blow it in again when we have done it.

- “ If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
- “ I can again thy former light restore,
- “ Should I repent ; but once put out the light of life,
- “ We know not where is that Promethean heat
- “ That can that light relumine ?”

I know you have some qualms after you think you have snuffed *too close* ; but there are some physicians who will laugh at the tenderness of your conscience ; for they regard mankind in the gross as farthing rush-lights all.

BUT in every distress, let prudence actuate us ; particularly the prudence of holding our tongues ; yes, and veiling our countenances too. I pray God befriend us, and then we shall not stand in need of the friendship of men.

THE metropolis is a stormy ocean—covered by a *powerful* and *numerous enemy*—No *small craft* can possibly weather out the first, nor make head against the second. Convoys are often im-

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potent, often deceitful. What wise man, then, would put from shore?—Farewell ! May that Being whose wisdom is all-sufficient, and whose power is almighty, graciously condescend to direct and defend us in all difficulties and dangers. Amen.

WE should encourage and comfort one another, and agree in waiting patiently God's time to alleviate our sorrows, not forgetting to embrace every help that religion and reason suggest. When the storm rages at sea, do the mariners forego their duty, and leave the ship to drive at the mercy of the wind? No; their courage rises in proportion to the difficulties they meet with, nor do they quit the pump till they sink. This should furnish admonitory lessons to you and me; for certain it is, that a complaining, desponding temper, unfits us for every thing, and renders our burdens more galling and cumbersome.

MY bed is often strewed with thorns; but I must journey through life upon the same terms that many wiser and better men than myself have done; and must reflect, with some degree of comfort, that I am making hasty advances to that
sanctuary,

DR. COTTON'S LETTERS. 165

sanctuary, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest."—Oh! my heart-strings, break not yet, out of pity to the worthier part of my family, who cannot lose me without suffering the greatest inconveniences.

YOU, who know mankind, cannot be insensible to the evils which always follow upon the alteration of friends. I dare say you will approve a maxim, which I have constantly adopted through life—Never to stand upon my own justification to the man I love, when he appears conscious that the right is on his side. For it is ten to one whether even the success of my pleadings be not accompanied with the ill opinion of my friend: and the forfeiture of his affection and esteem will be a poor compensation to me for the vanity of a victory. Only gross imputations, such as reflect upon our integrity and virtue, ought to put us upon disputation. Our arguments, like our swords, should be employed for the defence, and not for the conquest, of our friends.

REFLECTIONS upon past indiscretion are only to be encouraged, when we propose to

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avail ourselves, for the future, of prior miscarriages ; otherwise, such reviews serve to gall the mind, and render us unfit for the general duties and offices of life. They are like to the false pangs of parturiency, which diminish the strength and preclude the birth ; and therefore, like all such impotent throes, they ought to be opiated as fast as you can. But sometimes it happens, that they are restive to such prescriptions. When this is the case, they require a different treatment. Change the simile, and compare these painful thoughts to bold intruders, who are not to be prevailed upon by tender usage, but who require force to expel them your house. Fairly give them battle. A resolute and firm opposition, with a thorough determination to give them no future advantages over you, no future causes of triumph, will infallibly weaken their forces, procure a complete victory, and in the end regain peace to your poor distracted breast.

I have sometimes thought, that when the mind is agitated by disagreeable retrospects, too strong to be conquered by amusements, and too numerous to be dissipated by the ordinary business and occurrences of life ; the mind, I say, under such difficulties, resembles a distempered body, which cannot recover its health till the unnatural ferment in the juices has expelled itself, which it
seldom

seldom fails of doing at the long-run, if no further pabulum be again thrown into the habit. This salutary crisis too may be considerably assisted and forwarded by art; the struggles of nature may be hereby alleviated, and a complete recovery insured.

Once more, my dear Doctor, to the difficulties of our profession. Indeed, indeed, or, to speak after the manner of the Greeks, Amen, Amen, all that you advance upon this subject is too, too melancholy a truth. But as we, and many more deserving than we (or rather, more deserving than *I* am) are involved in equal difficulties with ourselves, methinks our reiterated complaints enervate our minds, and render us less and less disposed every day to combat with evils we cannot avoid. No mariner can soften the severity of a storm by sighs and exclamations. But the sailor, who stands collected, can many times obviate, by his fortitude and presence of mind, those dangers which would precipitate the timorous and dejected adventurer into the very bosom of the deep.—And thus much as to the moral view of these ills and inconveniences.

But when we regard all these discouraging incidents in a superior light, and consider the relations and connections we stand in to a future state of existence, surely we are culpable when we indulge ourselves in prospects *only*

which terminate with the grave. But say, if you please, that these secular interests are of more importance than I seem to represent them; nevertheless you will find my insinuations are just. For if a man cannot, by his anxiety and inquietude, alter the disposition of his situation, certainly it is folly to disquiet himself in vain; and grant him but a little patience, and the grave shall put a period to his sufferings. This patience will at least mitigate present evils; and it is much but reason and discretion will remove some of them. Wherefore, to conclude both my conversation and my paper, let you and myself act the parts of reason and religion; and in every difficulty, where the former cannot sustain us, most assuredly the latter will.

I MOST heartily wish you were in possession of a good-conditioned living. I mean, a benefice so happily circumstanced as would engage your residence thereon. Indeed, I hope you will never accept a living where you cannot reside comfortably one half of the year at least, and superintend the parish. I venture to say so, because I am fully persuaded in my own breast, that the accepting a church, with no other views than those of gain, is diametrically opposite to the
spirit

spirit of Christianity. It is true, this is a species of dishonesty which is practised daily by multitudes of the clergy. But numbers cannot give a sanction to an immoral act. Whoever reads the thirty-third chapter of the Prophecy of Ezekiel, must tremble at the thoughts of relinquishing his parishioners to a hireling. May you seriously consider the importance of the province you have entered upon ; and, only seeking the approbation of God and your own heart, may you pursue those measures of religious usefulness, which alone can administer solid tranquillity and comfort !— Alas ! at your period of life and mine, we should eye futurity, I mean a futurity beyond the grave, in every step we take ; and, by doubling our diligence for the time to come, endeavour to atone for our prior miscarriages.

BUT, with your leave, I will consider some other chapters in the Doctor's book—And first, as to the paralytic man, John, chapter the fifth. Mead thinks that the cure was owing to the mud of Bethesda's pool being impregnated with medicinal particles. Why then only a recovery performed upon the first person who stepped in ? Would not the entry of the first man, by his additionally

ditionally troubling the water, effectually suspend the mud, and thereby insure success to others? But his strictures upon Possessions, however seemingly strengthened by the authority of some great divines, are, in my humble opinion, very objectionable. If there had been no real Possessions, *why did our Lord countenance such an error?* especially since Dr. Mead says, that Hippocrates, or one of his scholars, wrote an useful piece to prove, that no diseases were inflicted by a supernatural power, and that men ought to be accounted jugglers and cheats, who infuse such notions into the minds of the people. And, immediately preceding this paragraph, he tells us, that physicians in former days took great pains to oppose the notion of dæmons inducing diseases, because people actuated by this persuasion neglected the proper methods of cure, and applied to religious rites and ceremonies. Again—the Doctor's objection to Possessions, from their wearing the appearances of diseases, is of no weight; because, supposing such Possessions possible, the signs thereof must discover themselves in some or other of the *symptoms of diseases*. The usual proof, which is brought to confirm Possessions, seems to me unanswerable, I mean the entry of the devils into the herd of swine. But I will suggest another proof, which I do not remember to have seen in any commentators :—

tators :—When the seventy disciples returned from preaching the gospel, and *healing diseases*, they said to our Lord, with *surprise* and *joy*, that *even* the devils were subject unto them, through his name. Now, if dispossession was nothing more than healing the sick, whence arose the disciples' astonishment and joy? Surely, not because they cured *diseases* only; for this power was expressly promised them at their setting out upon their journey; and therefore they were *precluded all surprise*. But be this as it will, our Lord's reply plainly determines the sense of that passage: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." This answer is unintelligible upon any other hypothesis.

IN my last, I endeavoured to justify the explanation I had given of Solomon's portrait of advanced age, and secretly wished for your approbation.—Formerly I told you, that I thought the Doctor had impaired the force of the miracle which our Lord wrought, in raising Lazarus from the dead, by supposing him to be disentangled from his bandages, and to advance from the tomb in progressive motion.—The expositors tell us, that

that the design of the Roman governor, in giving our Lord the title of *King* of the Jews, was merely to *reproach*, and render the Messiah *ridiculous*. How this sentiment could ever be adopted by the Doctor, is matter of surprise to me; for Pilate (as is evident from the whole of the trial) laboured to deliver Jesus; and at last consented to his death with great reluctance. He professed, in open court, that our Lord was guilty of no capital offence; nay, he proceeded so far as to declare, that he could find no fault whatever in him. The narrative also mentions, that when Pilate heard our Lord assert his claim of being the *Son of God*, he was greatly terrified, and the more so, because his wife had, by a previous message, begged of him (from what she had suffered in a dream) to decline passing judgment upon the *righteous* prisoner; and the story, so far as it related to the Governor's transactions, concludes with Pilate's washing his hands, as a public declaration of his innocence with respect to his shedding our Lord's blood. Now, when all these circumstances are duly weighed, is it not highly improbable that Pilate would pour insults upon Jesus? However, a careful attention to a preceding passage unravels every difficulty. The Jews, when they observed the disposition of the judge to favour our Lord,

Lord,

Lord, attempted to intimidate Pilate, by saying, that he was no friend to Cæsar. They intimated to him, that such a culpable tenderness towards the imaginary delinquent, implied a connivance at usurpation, and would draw down upon him the resentment of Tiberius. This insinuation alarmed both the ambition and fears of the governor, and extorted from him the condemnation of our Saviour. To secure himself, as much as possible, from the bad effects of any disadvantageous reports made by the Jews to the Emperor, Pilate placed the superscription, I have been speaking of, upon the summit of the cross; and this superscription penned in three languages, that thereby the Roman soldiers, and the Greeks, (as well as Jews) whom curiosity had brought thither to be spectators of the execution, might *avow*, that the Governor had crucified our Lord, *because* he had declared himself a *king*. Be pleased also to remark, that the nature of the punishment imported the crime to be a crime against the state, or civil society, and not of a religious nature; for Pilate most probably would not have taken cognizance of the latter; or, if he had done so, it is likely he would have punished Jesus according to the Mosaic law, namely by stoning, for this was the kind of death inflicted upon blasphemers. In truth, he don't appear, in the subsequent part of the

5

tragedy,

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tragedy, to be in a humour to please the Jews, by concurring with them in their derision of our Lord; on the contrary, he was piqued that they had compelled him to give sentence of death against Jesus. See his *last* reply to the chief priests, when they desired him to make an alteration in the words of the superscription.

THE human body is so complicated a structure, as to preclude surprise at our ignorance of the seats and nature of many diseases; and, when we take into consideration the age of the patient who is writing to you, methinks we cannot, without impeachment of our understanding, wonder at his deficient health. In the works of art there is something analogous to this subject—A curious piece of mechanism, compounded of a multiplicity of springs and wheels, is so frequently impaired by time, and rendered so irregular in its movements, that the very artificer, who constructed the system, is frequently at a loss to specify the defective particulars.—But I will no longer protract this tedious egotism of a trivial individual.

YOUR

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YOUR very kind letter came safe to hand; and I embrace the present occasion of replying to your favour, lest an increase of the infirmities of age should totally preclude me a future opportunity. I have passed almost three winters beyond the usual boundary appropriated to human life; and, having thus transcended the longevity of a septuagenarian, I now labour under the inconveniences and evils of advanced years. I am emaciated to a very great degree, and my trembling limbs are so weak, as to feel insufficient to support my weight. The languors likewise which I suffer are so frequent and severe, as to threaten an entire stop to the circulation, and are sometimes accompanied with that most distressful of all sensations, an anxiety *circa præcordia*. I sleep so little during the night, that in general I can rise up at the voice of the bird, be that period ever so early. Nor are my mental powers less deficient than my bodily strength; for my memory is notoriously impaired; and a subject which requires a little thought, becomes a burden hardly supportable. Are not all the particulars which I have enumerated, proofs of their being the *concluding* page of Shakespear's "strange eventful history?" Yes, surely, my dear friend, when an inspired author announces the same truth. Nor are you and I to wonder, that, in our passage through this world,

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world, the weather and the ways grow the worse the longer we travel, and the nearer we approach to our journey's end. The sacred writer just now mentioned affirms, that when those comfortless days arrive, which are attended with satiety, disgust, and inquietude, we must expect the clouds to be often returning after the rain.—Amid these melancholy scenes, it hath lately pleased Divine Providence to bereave me of one of the best of daughters, who never gave me a moment's uneasiness but at her death, and in that illness which led to it; I mean my daughter Kitty. “*Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus tam chari capitis ?*” But no more of this awful occurrence.

I AM the more astonished at * * * * *, engaging in a farm, because he is a man of sense, and must, upon due consideration, be apprised of his own deficiency in point of country knowledge, of various losses incident to this profession, and the inconveniences arising from placing an implicit faith in others. Again—upon just reflection, he must be sensible, that no farm can turn to account, unless the farmer is at the head and tail of every thing himself, and accompanies the produce of his fields and folds to the market; but this is a servitude, which our friend,

friend, of all men living, will be most averse to. The consequence, therefore, of his new engagements will most assuredly terminate in disappointment, anxiety, and chagrin; and, ere long, he will say with Soame Jenyns, in his Epistle to Lord Lovelace, or, rather, he will think with the Poet, that a country retreat should not be encumbered with country cares :

“ But then no farm I occupy,

“ With sheep to rot, and cows to die.”

Let me add, as applicable to this subject, two couplets from an old favourite author of mine, Mr. Pomfret, once minister of Luton :

“ No choice had e'er so happy an event,

“ But he who made it did that choice repent :

“ So weak our judgment, and so short our sight,

“ We cannot level our own wishes right.”

Well, my dear friend, what is the conclusion of the whole matter ? is it not this :—That there is no such thing as real unmingled felicity here below ? That happiness is all a vain pursuit, quite from the cradle to the grave ? That it is altogether an imaginary acquisition, which no man ever did or ever will possess, so long as he is a sojourner amidst sublunary scenes ?—We sow hopes and wishes, and pray what do we reap ? The answer is obvious—We reap disappointment

and inquietude.—A miserable harvest ! you will say.—True.—But nevertheless we repeat our useless labour ; and thus perpetuate to ourselves vexation and sorrow. He then, my dear friend, is the prudent man, who is contented to take this world as he finds it ; who relishes its comforts, improves its crosses, and expects happiness only in superior regions.

Dear W.

THOUGH I have nothing more to say, than what I have already said a thousand times over, I cannot forbear repeating the assurances of my esteem and value for you. Pray how doth Mrs. * * * *'s constitution comport with the present severe weather ? March went out like a lamb, 'tis true ; but methinks he hath reassumed his lion disposition, and returned to us a most unwelcome associate with April.—I am sadly afraid that he will brush off with his tail the bloom of our wall trees, which you know will be no small disappointment to such a garden epicure as I am. 'Tis plain he pays no regard to senators and almanack-makers, or he would not have pretended his old claims, and infringed thus upon the parliamentary alteration of our calendar.

I AM

I AM always sorry when precluded the opportunity of conversing with you, conscious that every year renders opportunities fewer ; and that by and by will put an end to our correspondence, and seal up our lips in everlasting silence ; for which reason, the remaining intercourses of our friendship must rise in their value, much after the same manner as we estimate our gold, the worth whereof is encreased by a deficiency in its quantity. For when a purse of a hundred guineas is reduced to a score, and never more can be replenished, the residue of our coin must of consequence mount in its valuation. This is certainly a fact ; and, so far as it relates to our wealth, we are all willing to subscribe to the truth thereof ; but as it relates to our *time*, either we dispute the fact, or act inconsistently with the inferences which it suggests. For what is more common than to see a man of *sixty* personating the character of a boy of *sixteen*, as to prodigality of time ? But the oddity of this disposition is the more extraordinary, when we consider the absurdity of such conduct in old age, and contrast it with the views and behaviour of youth. Grey hairs squander time, and hoard money ; green heads are lavish of both. Now the avarice of age ought to be revered ; for, since the days of advanced life cannot possibly be many, the old man, therefore, should not spend one moment but

in purchase of its value, because he hath but few moments to spend. The riches he withholds, he ought to be liberal of, because his wealth preponderates his time as to quantity. The young man is profuse of time, because he expects to attain to longevity (though, by the by, he is wrong in his arithmetic, because he counts upon uncertainties.) However, this is not inconsistency of character: but what follows is great inconsistency, I mean the squandering away his money. For if he reckons and depends upon a multitude of years, prudence should hint to him frugality; because, in proportion to the length of his life, the greater and more frequent will be the demands of life upon his purse.—But I am called away, and cannot finish this worthless declamation. I dare say you are not sorry for it; for you must think me a dull moralist. I do assure you I think myself one.

DR. YOUNG is certainly as true an original as any of the authors whom he enumerates.—But indeed I think there is a difficulty in fixing the character of originality. Homer, says the Doctor, is an original. Yes, to us he appears so, because we have no knowledge of any works preceding Homer's writings, from which
Homer

Homer might borrow his sentiments and style; but, for all this, it is not impossible that he might be indebted to writers before his time. I think we stand a better chance to ascertain originality, when we speak of more modern authors. Shakespeare's volumes are in the hands of every body; and every reader will say that Shakespeare is an original, because the peculiarity of his genius is not to be found in any other writer whatever. Now, had he assumed another's thoughts, and manner of composition, he must have been detected, because he could not go further back for instruction than we can go; and, as multitudes have gone as far as it is possible, they must have discovered a similarity in Shakespeare's writings, and the writings of other authors, if any such similitude was to be found. Bacon (Lord Verulam) was indisputably an original; perhaps the greatest mere man that ever existed, as to the powers of his mind. Take all the authors that ever wrote before him, upon the subjects he hath written, and he appears an Atlas amidst so many mole-hills. Friar Bacon was likewise a most astonishing genius; but, in my opinion, originality doth not so properly consist in the sublimity of genius, as in the novelty of characters. The two Bacons, indeed, were originals, because the genius of each of them struck into new paths of science. Bun-

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yan, the author of the Pilgrim's Progress, was indisputably an original writer, because there never was (at least so far as I know) any thing existing before like the Progress of the Pilgrim. Yet the greatest advocates for John Bunyan's works cannot say that he had any sublimity of genius. There is no comparison between him and Sir Isaac Newton; yet the latter, notwithstanding the stupendous exertions of his mind, hath no claim to originality, because thousands have travelled in the same paths of knowledge; though none of his predecessors have ever advanced so far as he hath done

* * * * *

If I am an original, you must allow that genius is not essential to originality.

IN matters of abstruse faith, such, for instance, as hath the Trinity for its object, there are, I dare say, no two men who think exactly alike; nay further, perhaps it may be questioned, whether one and the same man ever thought precisely the same, upon such topics, for two hours successively. If this observation be true, as I am persuaded it is in some measure so, how preposterous, as well as immoral, is it, to burn mankind for different opinions
in

in point of faith ! According to my sentiments of creeds, the most orthodox men themselves, who shall abet persecution in any degree, will richly merit to be well singed every time they ruminate on their credenda.

BUT what can a parent do with a child, now-a-days, who is designed for any of the learned professions ? Our universities are become so expensive, and productive of so little knowledge to the students (in general) that even men of fortune cannot support such demands, and men of sense cannot approve the conduct of these seminaries. If you send a boy for education to London, the hazard of a miscarriage is still greater ; and the poor disappointed parent hath a very considerable additional sum to pay for the speedier destruction of his son.

It hath often been mentioned, as a subject of admiration and complaint, that though the income of every trade and profession be far inferior to such incomes forty years ago, yet the apprentice-fee is superior now to the demands of former times. Although attornies, at this period, swarm like locusts, and hardly one in ten, when his clerkship is expired, can get salt to his porridge ; nevertheless, an attorney shall, instead of sixty, eighty,

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or an hundred pounds (formerly given with a clerk) insist upon three hundred pounds now with every clerk he takes. When apothecaries did not abound in country towns, and the revenue of this province was considerable, eighty pounds was esteemed as a large sum for an apprentice-fee. Now, that apothecaries are so thick sown in every village, that each can hardly get bread, the starving master will, notwithstanding, ask an hundred pounds with every apprentice. A Turkey merchant, who tells you that the trade to the Levant is not productive of five per cent. still continues to ask a thousand pounds for instructing a youth in this branch of commerce, although merchants of this class made fifteen or twenty per cent. of their money in queen Ann's reign. How fares it with learning? It is universally confessed, that is the worst commodity you can carry to market; and yet, to ascertain a very moderate stock thereof, requires a sum of money to be expended, at this time a-day, which, when laid out fifty years ago, was almost as sure an estate to the proprietor as a good freehold. But, besides a bad commodity as to the inferiority of price, it is also a very precarious commodity as to the sale. A man may expose his literary wares day after day, and year after year, without a single chapman offering any purchase-money at all. The
Scholar

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scholar may read all day, and ruminate upon what he hath read all the subsequent night ; he may rise early, go to bed late, and eat the dry crusts of carefulness, and solicitude, and anxiety ; and, when he dies, is found expiring in a garret, of famine and a broken heart ; or, which is still worse, and yet oftentimes the case, be agonizing, in his last moments, under all the penury, cruelty, and horrors of a jail. Many a learned man hath been able to set his seal to this truth, who hath never had any notorious guilt to upbraid himself withal ; and of whom the worst which could be said of him was, that he died the dupe of credulity and indiscretion.

But a mind at ease, and tinctured with religious principles, will reply, that all these dispensations of Providence are intended for the exercise of our faith, patience, and submission to the divine will. It may be so, for any thing I can urge to the contrary ; but how a man can possess his soul in patience, who hath nothing else to possess, is a matter of great doubt to me. The wisest and best of men, in all ages, have deprecated these evils, as greatly above human strength. The necessity and *importance* of our daily bread is abundantly inferable from our Lord's inserting this article in that prayer which he hath exhibited for the model and copy of our own prayers.—But I will not detain you any longer with this harangue. You
must

must almost be possessed of apostolic patience, to bear with so tedious a declamation.

I hope you are no sufferer in your health by performing the last office of friendship to Mrs. R——. She engaged with the last enemy, and fell in the combat. We shall all be summoned into the same field, and perish in the conflict; for there is no discharge in that war; so says Solomon. However, a greater than Solomon hath furnished us with consolation against our defeat, by assuring us, that by and by the vanquished shall prove the victors. But to drop all such obvious remarks; and to enquire how it comes about that death is so differently regarded by different people.

- One man cannot comport with the thoughts of a dissolution. The very mention thereof causes him to shudder, and, so long as the thought rests upon his mind, it imbitters all his comfort. Another man talks of dying without emotion, and meets death with equal unconcern. If we endeavour to account for these different effects upon the principles of religion, we shall often miscarry in the attempt. For good men are as loth to leave this world, as vicious men are. There are some pious persons who, though abounding with grace, cannot be prevailed upon to think on death with tolerable satisfaction. And how many have I known, who were far from unbelievers,

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lievers, yet whose characters were otherwise very faulty, that have gone off the stage with seeming indifference; who talked of dying as discharging a debt to nature, and have, to all outward appearance at least, sustained their spirits with uncertain hopes of faring as well as their neighbours in another world! Divines have resolved all these appearances into an over-weening affection for the world, spiritual infatuation, or judicial blindness, &c. and perhaps these causes have sometimes obtained; but I am inclined to think that the *causa proxima* is constitution.

I MUST own, that I heartily wish for a reasonable and permanent peace. The immense national debt furnishes a melancholy retrospect to a thinking mind; and the continued effusion of human blood must sensibly affect that man who is not lost to all the feelings of humanity. We may talk what we please of American savages; but the savages of education far exceed in cruelty the illiterate savages of the woods. The latter are but brutes on two legs; and, to say the worst of them, they can only be classed among wolves, tygers, and such like inhabitants of the desert; but the former are arrant dæmons, under the

disguise of men. When David had offended his Maker, by shewing such a distrust of his providence, after signal deliverances, as to number Israel and Judah, the prophet gave him his choice of three kinds of punishments, *famine, pestilence,* and the *sword*. The royal delinquent prudently deprecated falling into the hands of *man*; well knowing, that a flight of three months, before a victorious enemy, was the forest calamity which could possibly befall him and his people. He was not to be informed what cruel lengths ambition would run, when flushed with a series of success; and therefore he wisely gave the preference to correction from the hand of an angel, who could not be actuated by pride and cruelty, nor transcend the boundaries of his commission,

Is the friend with whom you are going to sojourn for a time, fond of a country retreat? Are the shades and solitude of ——— productive of joys superior to the shining counters of ———? The pleasures of wealth and distinction, I am as much a stranger to, as a man blind from his birth is estranged to the charms of painting. Nevertheless, I dare venture to affirm, that if there is any such thing as happiness (for I am not sure there is any such thing) it must be lodged in the private walks and by-paths of life. But, as tastes are various in different persons, I suspect that I
speak

speak with too much partiality to my own. I am one, who, being harrassed with business, anxiety, and disappointment, would think a bare cessation from the cares of life, *felicity* sufficient. Yet such *quietism* will appear only a negative bliss, at best, to a man who cannot relish existence without quick sensations and forcible pleasures; nay, it is more than probable that he would not allow what I am supplicating for to be any bliss at all; but a smart fit of the gout or stone would speedily rectify his error, and teach him better philosophy. For, let him be stretched upon a bed of torture during a few days, and, upon the termination of his sufferings, he will readily acknowledge, that a mere cessation of pain is *positive* pleasure. By and by he himself will find the human system so constructed, that it cannot comport with a perpetuity of tumultuous joys. The active and vigorous exercises of youth have no charms for us in our advanced years, because the powers of exertion have failed us, and our taste for such entertainments hath departed with our strength. In old age, we covet very moderate satisfactions indeed. Like hirelings, worn down with the preceding labours of the day, we solicit the approach of evening. Not as formerly, perhaps, for the protracted pleasures of the bottle, but for the silent comfort of stretching ourselves
 upon

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upon our couches, and sinking into rest. This is the happiest period, to the aged man, of the whole four and twenty hours. It is to him what assignations and plays are to the young man. It is the point he keeps in view from the time he arises in the morning, till he returns to his bed again; and, being incapable of stronger delights, he rejoiceth in this quiescent state. This is certainly the nature and disposition of our system through its progressive stages, notwithstanding the antiquated beaux and belles of the present century may appear as objections to my doctrine. In my opinion, they are the most contemptible of the species, as counteracting the laws of our corporeal and mental constitution. They resemble eunuchs, who, conscious of their deficiency, are irritated at their inability, and have a taste for pleasures which they can never enjoy, and thereby become the dupes of impotence and affectation.

Dear Doctor,

MRS. C—— affectionately concurs with me in sending you the compliments of the ensuing festival. We most heartily wish you that chearful disposition of mind which gives the relish to all our enjoyments; which alleviates the
cares

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cares of life, and doubles the comforts of it; which, like the philosopher's stone, transmutes copper into gold, and is a never-failing source of true riches; which is the best opiate under bodily pains, and the best prophylactic in mental disorders. It is an elixir of sovereign efficacy when it is genuine. But, generally speaking, it is a composition which requires time, labour, and pains in the preparation; hence few there are who will be at the trouble and cost of making it. They substitute a counterfeit in its place, which, however it may wear the external appearance of the original tincture, is nevertheless a most vapid medicine. The ancient heathens were so sensible of the value of such a medicament, that multitudes of them turned chymists upon this occasion. But, notwithstanding all their boasted recipes, they were found, upon trial, to be nothing worth. The only true prescription is to be met with in a volume of an author, who was born about this period of the season, seventeen hundred and sixty years ago. It is truth, that the book is commonly exploded, or, at the best, but very lightly esteemed. And I am inclined to think, that its present disreputation is greatly owing to the multitude of copies which are spread every where up and down the kingdom. Could you suppose a despotic prince to call in all the impres-

sions

fions extant, or prohibit, upon severe penalties, all families from reading this book, I verily believe its value would be greatly enhanced by its scarcity or perils; and that this blessing, like health, would appear to the greatest advantage when once taken from us. What poor sickly appetites are ours! that lose their taste for an entertainment of the most refined and delicate nature, because the table is daily spread, and the doors of the banqueting chamber are open to every guest.—But I will not fatigue you with my allegories. If you approve them, you can carry them on yourself; and if you do not relish this manner of writing, I have said too much already.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE thought much upon the subject of your late conversation. But I still persist in my sentiments, that the frequent consideration of death is the only expedient which can reconcile us to dying. It is very true, that dying-work is, generally speaking, difficult work, and a dying-hour a most formidable hour! But will the difficulty or terror of that period be lessened by inattention, or procrastination of thinking? No, surely:—Those parting struggles of soul and body, and the horrors

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JUDGMENT OF THE MOST WISE, WILL BE EXERCISED
 PROPORTIONATE TO OUR WORTH, IN POSSESSION OF
 THOSE. Will I ask the good man be averse
 to death? Is it not the gate of admission into the
 brightest scenes and the best of company? an en-
 trance into immortality, purity, and perfection?
 Who are to be our associates? The spirits of just
 men ripened into excellency: an intercourse with
 angels and arch-angels; and, to complete our hap-
 piness, the fruition of that sovereign exemplar of
 all perfections, the Deity himself!

Dear Sir,

LAST Thursday night, ——— exchanged
 this life for a better.—Three or four days be-
 fore she died, she discovered an universal languor,
 which portended a speedy dissolution. Upon the
 whole, her transition was easy, and much to be
 desired. For, although a good man hath nothing
 to fear after death, yet he may reasonably be afraid
 of the pangs and agonies which often accompany
 dissolving nature. St. Paul himself, with all his
 apostolical attainments, could not repress his fears
 and anxieties upon this subject. Fain would he
 have declined this combat with the king of ter-
 rors; for, although he was sure of coming off

more than a conqueror, through him that loved him, yet he apprehended that he might be greatly wounded in the engagement. He was abundantly sensible of the superior happiness of a future state; he was likewise impatient to enter upon the possession of those joys; but the road thereto, which he preferred, was that which Enoch and Elijah had gone before. He expressed a sure and certain hope of being hereafter admitted into *a house not made with hands*, a building of eternal duration! but, nevertheless, he could not easily brook the thought of his own tabernacle being first taken down. So far was he from wishing to be unclothed, that he, on the contrary, wished for the immediate superinduction of immortality, or the absorption of this present existence in life everlasting.

Dear Sir,

I TRULY think Mr. ——— an extraordinary man, when I reflect upon the meanness of his birth, education, and original profession. It is very probable, that had he continued in the exercise of his former province, he would have appeared to a greater advantage, than by moving in a superior sphere. For that is superexcellent from a bulk or stall, which is but an indifferent performance

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formance when delivered from a pulpit. Novelty is the principal source of our pleasure and admiration; and to meet with some bold outlines of sense and genius, where we never could reasonably expect to find any, must always be productive of delight and approbation. Another remark I have to make is this, that sentiments and language in a familiar conversation, often create surprise and satisfaction; but when such thoughts and expressions are committed to print, they are so far from charming the reader, that they occasion disgust. The cause whereof is too obvious to be expatiated upon. I would therefore only observe, that if Mr. — had, *viva voce*, uttered to us some of the inclosed essays, with his last upon his knee, you and I should have deemed him a prodigy of a cobbler; and judged him worthy of a more exalted occupation. However, I must ingenuously own to you, that, notwithstanding all these strictures, I entertain a favourable opinion of his parts, and am inclined to believe, that, if he had had the benefit of a proper education, many of us might have blushed at the superiority of his attainments over us. I often think of such persons with secret shame to myself. For instance, Molly Leaper, who is my superior in poetry.

Dear Sir,

IT is an astonishing affair, how some men, and even sensible men too, will make a sacrifice of their understanding to absurdities. However, this is what we see done every day, and more especially in matters of religion. Mankind are afraid of exerting their reason, where it ought to be exerted most; and where a timid surrender thereof too evidently denotes those unworthy ideas which we entertain of the majesty of Heaven. But human nature is always for running into extremes. Either a man will believe nothing at all of Christianity, or he will believe more than he ought to do. For my own part, I am quite of opinion, that the doctrine of election, carried beyond the boundaries which Mr. E—— hath explained, is productive of the worst of evils. When adopted by honest minds, it generally terminates in despair—When adopted by knavish minds, it leads to every thing destructive of worth and virtue; and gives the professors of these predestinarian tenets; opportunities of persuading the greatest rascals upon earth that they are in a state of salvation.

Dear

Dear Sir,

A GENTLEMAN told me yesterday, that a captain ——— was the present gallant of a pretty woman whom you and I know.

This morning, at five o'clock, I was ruminating upon the above-mentioned intelligence; and was thinking on the sensations which must unavoidably arise in the mind of a person who was hourly acting contrary to her own convictions, if a person religiously educated, and of infirm health, (which are circumstances that cannot fail of aggravating the error, and even of imbittering the pleasure of sensual gratifications.) The former is a source of horror, the latter a source of fear. If such a breast appears the object of detestation to a virtuous mind, it must likewise appear the object of pity to a compassionate mind. As Dr. Tillotson somewhere says, error is endless, and he who gets once into a wrong path, can hardly ever find his way afterward into the right road. Hence, how emphatical is that clause in the prayer of our Lord—"Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil!"

Dear Sir,

HAVE you read Dr, Chandler's Defence of David's character? I am setting about to read it, and dare say that I shall be highly pleased with the perusal. I have already dipt into the book, and, by a cursory inspection, I am inclined to believe the reviler of the Hebrew monarch is a mere baby in point of learning, when compared to the champion who espouses David's cause. But, all religious views and points of erudition set aside, the historian betrays great want of ingenuity and candour, a defect that is hardly pardonable in any biographer, and perhaps altogether inexcusable, when complicated with acrimony and malevolence. However, I shall take my leave of the disputants for the present, and conclude my conversation with offering you an observation I have frequently made, in my retired hours, upon the more faulty parts of David's conduct; and upon those authors who take a secret pride and pleasure in sapping the foundations of revealed religion. The grossest of all the crimes which the Psalmist committed, were the murder of Uriah, and the adultery that followed; or the infamous and adulterous passion, which prompted the royal delinquent to set a brave soldier and faithful subject at the head of the battle, with the base and wicked view of his destruction.

destruction. The fact is obvious, and will not admit one single circumstance to palliate the guilt. But, if the crime was superlatively foul, was not the repentance of the criminal most exemplarily great? What bitter agonies of soul did the gratification of his passion cost him! If any man in the present times should commit an atrocious action, in no respect inferior to the sin of the son of Jesse, and should afterwards be broken upon the wheel for his wickedness, and be left to expire in the most excruciating torments; should we not say, that the unhappy wretch had expiated his guilt by the severity of his sufferings? and, would not common humanity restrain us from all additional invectives, or prosecutions of his memory? In what degree was David's punishment beneath the execution now mentioned?—But my inference from this record of history is, in my humble opinion, a most important and a most comfortable conclusion. I mean, that the royal penitent hath exhibited, in his own example, one of the strongest proofs imaginable of the power and force of repentance, to reinstate us in the favour and friendship of Almighty God, although our offences should, in their complexion, emulate the scarlet, or in their multitude, the sands of the shore; for the aggravations of David's iniquities were doubtless very numerous. It is very true, that the

Scriptures in general represent the majesty of Heaven as extending his most gracious pardon and compassion to all sincere penitents, be their past iniquities ever so many or ever so inflamed: but it must also be remarked, that when the human mind labours under guilt of the deepest dye, the offender cannot apply general promises to the purposes of consolation. You must produce a case in point, as the lawyers term it, before the wounded conscience can feel any remission of its tortures. The instances, therefore, of David's wickedness, and of David's repentance, is a scriptural chronicle of inestimable value, and ought to be acknowledged and received by us with gratitude and transport. For, though we be not all murderers, yet the best of us are grievous offenders.

I should proceed to my stricture upon those writers who please and pride themselves in destroying, to the best of their abilities, the fundamentals of revelation; but, as I have already detained you longer than I intended to do, I will not trespass on your time and patience any further.

INDEED, my dear Doctor, I am pleased with your commendations. It is natural for the heart of man to take delight in the applauses of
a friend.

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a friend. Since you intimate that you shall rest satisfied with the account I have given you of Dr. Chandler's book, without perusing it yourself, I fancy that I shall conciliate your further good opinion, and furnish you with an agreeable entertainment, by expatiating upon the subject of my last. However, it may be necessary to preface, that I had not time to read the Doctor's performance with that care it deserved; that the book being a society volume, I was obliged to send it away at a prefixed time; and that, for these reasons, the subsequent narrative will probably abound with those defects, which usually arise from an imperfect attention, and defective memory. I shall introduce my conversation with observing, that the historian is a Goliath in impudence and infidelity. He calls David a thief, a cut-throat, and profligate libertine. Shocking invectives, truly! especially to the ear of a Christian, who knows that the Messiah, in his generation after the flesh, sprang from the loins of the son of Jesse. The impious author, just mentioned, diverts himself mightily with that expression in sacred writ, of *the man after God's own heart*; wherefore Dr. Chandler properly begins his work with examining into the true nature and import of this phrase; and, with candor and justice, deduces the
true

true meaning of it from the context of the words. Saul had received a positive command from God, by the prophet Samuel, to smite Amalek, and utterly destroy man, woman, infant, suckling, ox, sheep, camels, and asses; but Saul, through a spirit of rebellion and avarice, spared the king of the Amalekites, and destroyed only what was *vile and refuse*. God was offended at this contumacy, covetousness, and prevarication, expresses the guilt thereof in the strongest terms, and denounces the rejection of Saul from the throne of Israel. But it must be observed, that, prior to this period, Saul had heinously transgressed, by sacrificing at Gilgal before the arrival of Samuel. The prophet had expressly told Saul *to tarry there till he should come to him, and shew him what he should do*; but Saul disobeyed the prophet's order, and offered sacrifice without the assistance or direction of Samuel. It is true, indeed, that the king tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed; but he did not tarry **TILL THE PROPHET CAME**; and although he had waited *according to the set time*, respecting the number of days, yet it is plain that he did *not tarry to the expiration of this period*; because the text says, that "as soon as Saul had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold Samuel

“came.” Then follows the passage with which the historian so mightily sports himself.—“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly. Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue; the Lord hath fought him a man after his own heart, &c.” that is, says Dr. Chandler, a man who will obey the voice of God by his prophets, and execute the commands of the Almighty. The Doctor’s antagonist affirms, that the expression *after his own heart*, denotes *the height of purity*. But, as Dr. Chandler very learnedly and judiciously observes, these words do not relate to David’s moral character. They imply no more, than that Saul’s successor should act answerably (in his regal capacity, and in his province of captain general over the armies of Israel) to the directions and commands of God. Although Saul was elected king, nevertheless it is evident, that God still maintained his royal prerogative, and that the elected monarch was no more than God’s vicerent. Hence the Almighty commanded Saul to apply to, and to be directed in his conduct by, the prophet Samuel.

That

That Dr. Chandler's explication of the phrase is the genuine meaning, appears likewise from St. Paul's use of this expression in the Acts : " I have
 " found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my
 " own heart, *which shall fulfil all my will.*"——I have said, that God commanded Saul to apply to Samuel, &c. ; but I do not mean an express declaration of such an order ; but that the duty of such an application is abundantly suggested by the whole of this scriptural history. And this truth is confirmed by Saul's opinion and belief of Samuel as a prophet from the Lord ; and by the anxiety he sustained, when Samuel refused all further intercourse with him ; and by the despair of Saul, when
 " the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams,
 " nor by Urim, nor by the prophets."

But, after all, I must ingenuously own, that there seems a little obscurity resting upon those texts, which speak of Saul's rejection. I am now referring to Saul's offering sacrifice at Gilgal. The Philistines had gotten together a very great army, wherewith they were to attack the Israelites. The strength and number of the enemy are particularly specified ; thirty thousand chariots, six thousand cavalry, and infantry as the sands on the sea-shore in multitude. Saul's forces were so dismayed at the sight hereof, that they deserted almost to a man,
 and

and fled to caves, thickets, rocks, mountains, and vales, for their own security. The few that were about Saul's person, trembled exceedingly at the destruction they were threatened with. Their king, doubtless, was also extremely alarmed. He appeared to wait the arrival of Samuel with all the impatience of desire. The prophet did not reach Gilgal till towards the termination of the time that was appointed. Under these great perils, difficulties, and disappointments, Saul hesitated to perform the sacred rites of sacrifice; and urges, in defence of his doing so without Samuel's presence, three arguments, which appear at first sight sufficient to justify him, or at least to mitigate his fault. These three motives were, the destruction of his troops, the delay of the prophet, and the formidable host of the Philistines. Afterwards he subjoins a fourth, which implied the expediency of sacrifice to render the Deity propitious to him, and the necessity he was under to consult this only method of safety. Whence then came it about, that Samuel past so severe a censure upon this behaviour of Saul, and denounced so terrible a punishment as the removal of him and his family from the throne? The Doctor, as I have already hinted, condemns Saul for not waiting the arrival of Samuel at Gilgal, and imputes his offering burnt-offerings to a proud supercilious disposition, which prompted

they will drop all acrimony against so benevolent a system. But, not to detain you any longer with such an unnecessary harangue, I shall now proceed to my former subject.—Dr. Chandler, as I have already observed to you, hath greatly the advantage over the wicked historian in point of erudition and argument. Whatever difficulties there may be in the abridgment of David's life, (and doubtless there are some difficulties in the sacred narrative) yet most certainly they are not of such weight as to justify a thorough disbelief of the worthy part of David's character, much less to justify raillery and invectives against the obscure circumstances of many texts. 'Tis plain, beyond dispute, that many passages are falsely translated, many are of doubtful signification, even in the original Hebrew, and there are many prohibitions, positive commands, and particular customs and usages, all which, at this distance of time, appear dark and inexplicable to us. But these objections are only such as may be urged against all ancient histories almost, especially against short compendiums, or general abstracts, the design whereof is only to exhibit the grand outlines, or characteristical marks of persons and things. The Doctor's antagonist appears sensible of this truth, by his pitiful subterfuges, in having recourse to palpable falsehoods, that he might fill up the picture with such colours

I PERFECTLY coincide with you, my dear Doctor, in sentiments touching revealed religion. It is undoubtedly matter of great surprise, that the generality of men should be disposed to quarrel with a system, which is so evidently calculated to procure peace in this world, and everlasting happiness in the next. What would the community think of that man, who should produce writings (wherein he was assured of a large estate in reversion) to the captious inspection of malevolent men, and be pleased with the imaginary flaws which they discovered in his title to such an important estate? But the most unaccountable of the species are they who are truly moral men, and yet set themselves in opposition to Christianity. The common herd of mankind is against religion, because religion is against them. Their hatred to sacred truths proceeds from their apprehensions of the vengeance which will follow upon their lewd and riotous courses. However, this is not the case with the moral Deists. Their conduct is far more unaccountable. When we have room to believe, that their behaviour proceeds from ill-grounded prejudices, the infection of bad company, and the bias of habit and custom, we are ready to hope, from the influences of our good-nature, that by and by they will see their error, and retract all their former tenets; or at least that they

they will drop all acrimony against so benevolent a system. But, not to detain you any longer with such an unnecessary harangue, I shall now proceed to my former subject.—Dr. Chandler, as I have already observed to you, hath greatly the advantage over the wicked historian in point of erudition and argument. Whatever difficulties there may be in the abridgment of David's life, (and doubtless there are some difficulties in the sacred narrative) yet most certainly they are not of such weight as to justify a thorough disbelief of the worthy part of David's character, much less to justify raillery and invectives against the obscure circumstances of many texts. 'Tis plain, beyond dispute, that many passages are falsely translated, many are of doubtful signification, even in the original Hebrew, and there are many prohibitions, positive commands, and particular customs and usages, all which, at this distance of time, appear dark and inexplicable to us. But these objections are only such as may be urged against all ancient histories almost, especially against short compendiums, or general abstracts, the design whereof is only to exhibit the grand outlines, or characteristical marks of persons and things. The Doctor's antagonist appears sensible of this truth, by his pitiful subterfuges, in having recourse to palpable falsehoods, that he might fill up the picture with such colours

colours as he thought most conducive to his own purposes. For instance, he says, that the Jews were violently bigotted to their priests, and were ever ready to execute what the ecclesiastics and the pretended prophets dictated to them. Upon this assertion he proceeds to insinuate, that David carried his cause by securing the priesthood in his interest.—But, as the Doctor justly notices, there were no people under the heavens more restive and rebellious than the Jews in matters relative to religion. They were so far from reposing an implicit faith in what their sacred teachers taught, that they were continually running counter to their doctrines, and falling into idolatry. 'Tis humorous enough to see what contradictory arguments the Deists make use of to support their cause. I remember Lord Shaftesbury argues directly contrary to the historian; for his Lordship, who wounds religion through the sides of the Jews, represents this nation as gloomy, stubborn, and refractory to their priests. And it cannot be denied that this was too much their disposition. The historian, who absurdly maintains that Samuel's anointing of Saul was all a juggle between them, (a point that the prophet and Saul had settled beforehand) cannot, methinks, with a grave face, continue at least to believe, that the authority of the priesthood prevailed powerfully

over king and people, when Saul most inhumanly butchered in one day fourscore and five persons who wore a linen ephod ; and smote all the city of the priests with the edge of the sword, extending his massacre not to the men only, but also to defenceless women and tender sucklings, nay, to the very brute part of the city, oxen, asses, and sheep. A shrewd sign indeed of Saul's being priest-rid ! Indisputably, the account given of the Jews in the Old Testament, from the beginning almost to the end of it, abundantly demonstrates, that neither they nor their monarchs were swayed by priests or prophets. Oh ! what a bitter charge did our blessed Lord bring against this obstinate and cruel people ! “ *Thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee,*” &c. The preceding verses of this chapter are very explicit upon this melancholy subject.

But to go on.—The *historian* breaks all bounds of decency in his comment upon David's reception of Abigail. He tells you, that David, at the head of a numerous banditti, was for putting an old farmer under contribution. That the poor man grew furly at the unreasonable demand of this freebooter, and justly withheld from him what was demanded. That Abigail, hearing of David's resentment, set forward as soon as she could to meet him, and, exposing her charms, speedily subdued

duced the wrath of the amorous hero. This interview furnishes the historian with more than luscious suggestions; for he hath the impudence to say, that when Nabal heard what was the price of the reconciliation, the cuckold broke his heart, and died a few days afterward. To prove this wicked allegation, he lays a mighty stress upon those particular words, "accepted thy person;" which are printed in capitals to draw the attention, and provoke the sneers of the reader. But the impious witling, by his utter ignorance of the Hebrew tongue, hath rendered himself an easy conquest to the Doctor; who, you may be sure, would not be sparing in his chastisements upon this occasion. It seems this phrase, "Accepted, thy person," occurs in other parts of scripture; and the words literally translated run thus; "I have received and accepted thy faces." These very words are used by the angel to Lot, (Gen. xix. 21.) implying, "I have granted thy request." So it is likewise said, that God accepted Job—in the original, "the face or faces of Job;" that is, was gracious and favourable to him. Again, (see Proverbs vi. 35) "He will not regard any ransom"—the Hebrew phrase is, "he will not accept the face of any ransom;" meaning, he will not esteem or accept any propitiation as a ransom. Whence it follows, that where our translation says,

“ David accepted the person of Abigail,” the sense is, that he granted her request, and, upon her interposition, would not revenge himself upon Nabal. Thus all the historian’s levity and mirth vanish into smoke, and prove his head as weak as his heart is bad.—However, this transaction in David’s life seems not altogether justifiable in every part. Perhaps the whole of this story hath not been handed down to us. All we can learn at present is this, that David and his retinue carefully forbore to injure Nabal in his property, at a period when it was in their power to have stripped him of all that he had. Nabal’s own servants bore testimony to this truth—Nay, they went further, and declared to their mistress, that David had employed his little army in protecting Nabal’s flocks, and the shepherds that tended them. The expression used on this occasion is very strong. “ They were a wall to us both by night and by day.” After shewing such clemency, and doing such a kind office, David might doubtless have reasonably expected, that Nabal should have assisted him in his wants, and not have returned a brutal denial, accompanied with invective and abuse. But at the same time it must be acknowledged, that David kindled into a faulty resentment, when he determined, not the death only of Nabal, but the death likewise of every male belonging to his

his family. This was a shocking resolve, and, had he executed it, we must have held such an action in the utmost abhorrence. Indeed David himself appeared sensible of its guilt, by his expressions of gratitude to God for restraining him from shedding blood, and avenging himself with his own hand. This hasty and cruel purpose of David cannot be defended. But although we allow it to be ever so bad, I doubt we shall find it a fall of passion too natural to the common depravity of the human heart; and it is well if many, who condemn this extravagant warmth in David, can clear themselves from the imputation of immoderate anger, even under *trifling* provocations.

However, without an attempt to extenuate this rash determination, but leaving it to struggle with its own guilt, I cannot see that the main of a man's character is to be decided by starts of temerity and resentment. What would the historian say, if his thoughts and resolutions were to be weighed in the balance of impartial rectitude? David had his failings, and very great failings too; but it is likewise to be taken into the account, that he had very great excellencies. Of the two favourites who stand upon record for the pre-eminence of their characters, and who were remarkably distinguished by God, in their being exempted from death, what says St. James, particu-

larly of one of them ? “ That he was a man subject to like passions as we are.” Now, it must be owned, that David laboured, in common with the rest of the species, under the passions, frailties, and defects of human nature. He was conquered by the prevalence of temptations, and the corruption of his own heart. But against the enormity of his crimes, set down the anguish of his soul, and the sincerity of his repentance ; his zeal for the worship of the true God, the fervour of his devotion, and the frequency of his prayers ; in a word, balance the excellencies of the saint against the excesses of the sinner, and David will be found to have attained that perfection of penitence, which is couched in that gracious declaration of our Lord, “ That joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”

But it is high time for me to dismiss you. Indeed, my dear Doctor, when I first undertook to give you a specimen of Chandler’s performances, I never thought I should have protracted my conversation to such an unreasonable length. However, I must crave your patience for one long letter more upon this subject, which I design shall compleat all I have to say upon it. By and
by

by my children will be at home, and their little impertinences will be your security against prolix epistles.

Dear Sir,

THE account which the Old Testament gives of David's actions ought to be considered by us as a very small abridgment. Had a fuller history been necessary, undoubtedly we had been favoured with it. But whatever obscurity may rest upon some part of David's conduct, yet it is plain, that those parts of it, which immediately relate to our edification and comfort, are abundantly explicit. What referred to his regal capacity can affect us but very remotely. We are chiefly interested in those transactions, that represent him as a great sinner and a great penitent. This hint leads me to reflections upon his crimes of murder and adultery; the former was the consequence of the latter. Dr. Chandler, in my humble opinion, hath not displayed his usual candour and strength of argument, in his criticism upon this subject. In truth, what he advances, in order to soften the king's guilt, favours of a puerility. The actions are detestable, and cannot admit of any palliation whatever. Indeed they are additionally heinous,

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when we consider that great and illustrious officer to whom the injuries were offered. There is something so manly and heroical in Uriah's refusing to pass the night in dalliance with his wife, while his fellow soldiers lay encamped in the open fields, that we cannot read this passage, without the highest admiration at his triumph over sense and passion. On the other hand, we cannot, without grief and abhorrence, behold David practising the most shameful artifices to defeat the resolution and virtue of his general. The Scripture declares, that David even attempted to inflame Uriah by intemperance. But, notwithstanding the temptation so far succeeded, as to occasion drunkenness, yet the fumes of wine could not get the better of the soldier's resolve; for it is expressly said, that "he went not to his own house." David was chagrined at this disappointment; wherefore, being partly agitated by anger, and partly by fear of Bathsheba's pregnancy making a discovery of his crime, he determined at all events to destroy the husband. The method he pursued appears to be peculiarly base. David, conscious of the valour and intrepidity of this faithful Hittite, meditates a scheme, whereby the excellent talents of that glorious general should work the means of his destruction. His royal master knew very well, that if he was placed in the front of the battle, the
degree

degree of danger would furnish fresh accessions of courage, and dispose him to such exertions of military prowess, as could hardly fail to prove the ruin of that heart wherein the most illustrious qualities were centered. However, David was determined, that if there was any thing farther to be done, which could ensure the death of Uriah, it should by no means be omitted. Guilt suggested, that there might be a bare possibility of Uriah's escaping destruction, by the assistance and bravery of his own troops. Wherefore David sent a positive command to Joab, that when he saw Uriah engaged in the hottest of the battle, he should order the forces of the Israelites to fall back, and resign their leader to the vengeance of the enemy.—This is a true and genuine detail of the aggravated circumstances of this dreadful murder; and, whoever reads the melancholy page, from which the above-mentioned particulars are drawn, must acknowledge, that the sacred penman hath not made the least attempt to palliate the enormities of David's transgression. Why then should Dr. Chandler say, that the royal delinquent discovered a greatness of mind in the very method which he had planned for the death of his general? The Doctor intimates, that David could have dispatched Uriah by private assassination; but chose that, as he was a soldier, he should fall in the bed of honour,

nour, fighting for his country. Surely this resource is a pitiful subterfuge, and reflects double infamy upon the head of the monarch. For where is the honour of a scheme, founded in adultery, and carried into execution by craft and dissimulation? Since the death of Uriah was a point determined, was not the guilt of this murder enhanced by the fraud and prevarication of the author thereof? Nay, private assassination had, in all probability, been a more eligible method of death. For a single thrust of a poniard was sufficient to preclude all future complaints of the injured husband. The end could have been answered by a single blow; whereas the exposure of this truly great man to the arrows and swords of a whole army, rendered him obnoxious to a multitude of wounds; and thereby superadded the charge of cruelty to the other crimes of David. I will not take upon me to prove, that the king was aware of these circumstances of pain and suffering, because the scripture is silent about them. But I will venture to affirm, that such a reflection was very natural, and could only have been over-ruled and stifled by the fears, hurries, and anxieties of a guilty mind. Nor can I quit this subject without noticing the inhumanity of David's appointing Uriah to carry the letter, which contained the warrant for his destruction. Must not the king
appear

appear a most shocking example of perfidy, cruelty, and folly, in the eyes of Joab, when he commanded him to consign Uriah over to certain death, without exhibiting the smallest accusation against this devoted victim? When a MILITARY monarch could preach, or at least insinuate disobedience and defection to his own army! and direct these orders to take place at a period, and under circumstances, which notoriously inflamed the guilt of the king; because Uriah was then fighting for his unfaithful master; and the gallantry with which, in all likelihood, he fought, and the peculiar perils to which he was exposed by leading the van of the army, and heading the attack, gave him a double claim to all the possible aid which the soldiers could afford him! No, my good friend, this part of David's behaviour will admit of no softenings whatever. Let it stand forth in its genuine colours of guilt and detestation. Let it be an everlasting lesson to the sons of men, of the power of temptations, of the weakness of human virtue, and of the concatenation of vice. When we see so great a king and soldier acting the part of an hypocrite, a coward, and a ruffian; so good a man betrayed, by the heat of passion and the gradation of sin, into the foulest of all enormities, adultery and murder; let us tremble for the insufficiency of our own virtue, and the treachery
of

of our own hearts. Instead of passing a severe censure upon the royal criminal, let us descend into our own breasts, and seriously resolve to amend what we find amiss there. If we are sincere and impartial in our search, we shall meet with ample matter wherewith to reproach our own hearts, and see so much to condemn and rectify in ourselves, that we shall have no time to criticise with malignity and acrimony upon the sins and miscarriages of the Hebrew king. In a word, let us, with grateful minds, adore Almighty God for his gracious display of mercy and forgiveness, so gloriously illustrated in the example of David; whence we may humbly hope, that, through the intercession of a Redeemer, we may find pardon and acceptance at the throne of grace.

But to proceed.—According to the order of time, I should before have mentioned an action of David, which the historian treats with great severity. Nor do I know, indeed, how it can be justified. I speak in reference to David's offering his service to the king of the Philistines, who were marching to attack the Israelites. The favours which David had received from Achish, were doubtless not sufficiently obligatory to vindicate David in fighting against his own countrymen. Dr. Chandler is at a loss what to say in David's behalf:

half: and, this moment, a thought occurs to me, which throws further obscurity upon this passage. How could David, consistently with loyalty and duty, join an army of aliens, and war against HIS KING? Now, it is very observable, that upon all occasions David expresses the highest reverence for the Lord's anointed. When he had Saul in his immediate power, and was counselled by Abishai to smite his enemy (or to give Abishai leave to smite him) David abhorred the advice, and replied, "Destroy him not—For who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?" It must also be remarked, that in all his expostulations with Saul, he insisted upon the loyalty of his principles, and challenged the king to point out a single breach of his fidelity. Jonathan urged the same argument repeatedly, in order to extinguish his father's resentment. How then came it about, that David should, all of a sudden, forget the duty he owed his king, and endeavour to enter into a foreign service, when the armies of the foreigner were designed to fight against Saul? It was more agreeable to reason, fidelity, and religion, for David to have waved all tenders of his services, even although Achish had importunately solicited them. But, thus unasked, to plead with an idolatrous prince for liberty of warring against Saul and the Israelites,

elites, appears to be an enormous act of rebellion. The difficulty too is still encreased, when we reflect, that at this very period David was the anointed successor to Saul; and consequently obliged to treat the Israelites as subjects, and not as enemies. Here, therefore, *SEEMS* to be accumulated guilt; namely, the default of his allegiance to his king and of duty to his country.

The story of David's behaviour to Shimei is very dark, and I think very far from being cleared up by Dr. Chandler. Shimei had treated the broken-hearted king with unparalleled cruelty and insolence. But David, like a great and good man, forgave the rebellious miscreant, and confirmed his pardon with the sanction of an oath. Nevertheless, upon his death-bed, he charges his son Solomon not to hold Shimei guiltless; but to bring his hoary head to the grave with blood. How can this order be reconciled with that text, "Therefore the king said unto Shimei, *Thou shalt not die*; and the king sware unto him?" If I remember aright (for I read Chandler's book very cursorily) the Doctor supposes, that, notwithstanding David had generously pardoned Shimei, yet the ungrateful offender privately continued to plot against the family upon the throne. And the Doctor forms these sentiments from David's words and Solomon's conduct. The dying monarch

monarch had said to his son, concerning Shimei,
 “ Thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou
 “ oughtest to do with him; but his hoar-head
 “ bring thou down to the grave with blood.”

As if he had said, Thou art a man of sense and penetration, thou knowest the seditious and turbulent principles of Shimei; wherefore, watch an opportunity of punishing his treachery with death.—And afterwards we are told, that Solomon prescribed such confinement and narrow boundaries to Shimei, which kings are accustomed to appoint, when they suspect a former rebel's attachment to his old cause. “ And the king sent
 “ and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build
 “ thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there,
 “ and go not forth thence any whither. For it
 “ shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and
 “ passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know
 “ for certain that thou shalt surely die.” A few verses afterwards we find, that Shimei broke his promise, and accordingly was put to death.

But I would notice, that however deservedly Shimei was destroyed, yet the scripture by no means assigns his breach of covenant to any seditious views. Three years he had past in his house at Jerusalem, without any suspicion of treasonable practices. The occasion of his leaving the

the city was the flight of two servants into the country of the Philistines; Shimei went in pursuit of the fugitives, and brought them from Gath. Solomon was made acquainted with Shimei's conduct, and immediately commanded Benaiah to slay him.

I shall conclude all my tedious commentaries with an ingenious stricture of Dr. Chandler upon these words—"And he brought forth the people
" that were therein, and put them under saws and
" under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron,
" and made them pass through the brick-kiln."

The Doctor acknowledges, that the Hebrew words here are difficult to be understood. But by a careful enquiry into the roots from whence these words are derived, he thinks that the true meaning of them is, that David, agreeably to the customs of all nations at that time of day, made slaves of the prisoners, appointing them to various kinds of servitude—Some, for instance, to husbandry, some to the more laborious parts of the carpenter's province, and others to the making and burning bricks.

Thus I have given you a summary of several chapters in the Doctor's volume. There are many learned annotations, which I have left behind; but those I have mentioned will be

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sufficient to conciliate your good opinion of the worthy, sensible, and animated author.

Dear Sir,

BUT, alas ! my dear friend, how little interesting are all these political points, when compared with the important scenes which I have been witness to this week ! I refer to the sickness and dying couch of that great man Dr. Young. It will never be my province to personate the statesman, or to move, even in the most subordinate sphere, relative to the administration of public affairs : but to act the part of a sick and expiring mortal, is an allotment which must soon be my portion ; and God Almighty grant, that I may be enabled to sustain this character with patience, fortitude, and faith !

In my last, I acquainted you, that I was called to Welwyn. When I arrived there, I found Dr. Yate waiting for me. It seems he had been sent for three or four days before my assistance was desired. Dr. Young's disorder was attended with some obscurity. But on Tuesday matters wore a very discouraging aspect ; and on Wednesday, Yate and myself gave up the case as lost. From that period to the present, Dr. Young hath

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been

been dying. Whether the scene be closed this evening I cannot take upon me to say ; but this day, at noon, the physicians took their leave. Dr. Young, although in his eighty-sixth year, has disputed every inch of ground with death, from the strength of his constitution, never impaired in early life by riot and debauchery. As I sat by his bedside, how earnestly did I wish the vital knot untied ! I humbly pray God, that myself, and all who are connected with me, whether by blood or friendship, may be favoured with an *easy* transition out of this world into a better. For long and painful agonizings of nature under her dissolution, appear to me sufferings hardly inferior to some of the severest tortures of martyrdom ; and consequently trials, which require apostolical attainments and supernatural assistances to support our souls under them.

Your friendship will excuse the melancholy reflections, for the sake of the object which suggested them. I was very fond of Dr. Young's company, and greatly venerated his mental abilities.

Dear

Dear Sir,

THERE is a great luminary (as you justly observe) lately set—to rise, I hope, more glorious in another world.

It is past all doubt with me, that Dr. Young's Night Thoughts have advanced the interests of religion. For, whatever imperfections there may be in that performance, there are indisputably some of the most serious, most important, and most elevated sentiments (expressed in the most nervous, striking, and animated language) which have ever dropped from the pen of man. It is said (and perhaps with truth) that there were oddities in Dr. Young's conduct. But these will moulder away from our remembrance faster than his ashes; while the more excellent parts of his character, like the colourings of a fine picture, will brighten by time, and improve every year in their valuation. Infidels and sensualists regard the deceased as an enthusiastic or melancholic. But that period is approaching, when wisdom will be justified of her children, and when intrinsic worth shall shine forth as the stars in the firmament.

I have sometimes thought, when I have heard men of literature speak with indifference of Dr. Young's abilities, that their strictures have pro-

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ceeded from a secret principle of envy. But when this generation is passed away, I dare say the Doctor's works will be universally held in great esteem,

*Virtutem incolumem odimus,
Sublatam ex oculis quærimus invidi,*

Dear Doctor,

I SHALL entertain you with two stories of Dr. E——, which, for the poignancy of his wit, are very extraordinary at his advanced years.

I suppose it will be needless to inform you, that he hath had three wives—whose deficiency of understanding, or futility of behaviour, would have exercised the patience of a saint.

The Doctor says, that some short time ago, a man knocked at heaven's gate, soliciting an entrance into the mansions of happiness. Peter (who, you know, is said to keep the key) enquired into the merits of the petitioner's request. The suppliant replied, that in the days of his flesh he had been very unhappy in his choice of a wife. His case was commiserated, his plea was allowed, and admission was granted.

Another sublunary sufferer, who had heard this comfortable intelligence, approached heaven's
portal

- portal with confidence of success; and, rapping at the door with the saucy air of a lacquey, strengthened his claim for admittance, by urging, that he had wedded two very bad wives.—Two! replied the celestial janitor, with surprise! Prithee, said he, get you about your business, man; we never receive fools into our society.

An impetuous young puppy was lately in the Doctor's company; at which time he inveighed severely against the Duke of Cumberland, for the destruction which his Royal Highness had made of the rebels at the battle of Culloden. The stripling called the Duke by the opprobrious name of Butcher, and affirmed his Highness, *after the engagement was over*, had, in cool blood, and with his *own* hand, murdered *five hundred* of the enemy. The ecclesiastical sage rejoined, sarcastically, 'And what! was that all?' "All!" said the youth, with a face of wonder—"Why, "were not five hundred victims sufficient instances of the duke's cruelty?" "Poo, poo!" answered the Doctor, 'you have got your story 'by halves. His Highness, after he had slaughtered five hundred Highlanders, eat up every one 'of them, which hath occasioned his excessive 'corpulency.'

Dear Sir,

MAY I express my joy at hearing that Mrs. W. is not yet commenced an immortal! Though I doubt not but she would be a gainer by such an exchange, yet they who are acquainted with her, will be better pleased at her further continuance in the flesh. Her system is a very delicate one; not so properly upholden by internal strength as by ease and tenderness. Thus a small taper, with a slender wick and feeble flame, shall last as long as a candle of six to the pound, provided it be defended from all rude blasts of wind, and other boisterous contingencies. That it may burn long, and burn bright, is my hearty wish. And, if you please, the same benediction shall be extended to your own luminary of life.

My dear Friend,

AND thus you learn, that the rich man died! It may not become you and me to make, from this event, any inferences answerable to that chapter of St. Luke from whence I have borrowed my capitals. But as I stood by the bedside, and enquired into the age of the dying man, I could not help thinking, that the parity of our years (*for it seems he had not commenced*
a sexa-

a *sexagenarian*) suggested to me a most important lesson; namely, that the same common enemy, who was then encountering Mr. **** was likewise in full march towards me, and would as certainly overtake me.

I have frequently thought how great must be the surprise of a soul just disembodied! The novelty of the scenes must powerfully affect even every good man. But if the deceased were unhappily of a different character, what inexpressible consternation and terror must seize the guilty stranger!

Are these reflections owing to the prejudices of education, as the gay part of the world would say they are; or are they not the natural and obvious thoughts of a reasonable being? especially of a man who believes a futurity, and that his conduct in this world will influence his condition in the next.

Dear Sir,

I AM sorry you are a farmer again; because I think that not one in a thousand of that profession is an honest man. It was said by Augustus Cæsar, that he held physicians cheap, because he thought their interests were so closely connected with diseases, that they must be tempt-
ed

ed to wish evil to mankind. Do not wealthy farmers wish scarcity to a community, that they may avail themselves of a general want?

Formerly, when a raw unexperienced boy, I was used to entertain a most favourable opinion of the innocence and probity of the class of men I am speaking of. This error I was certainly led into by books.

But now, whatever poets write,
 'Tis sure the case is alter'd quite.
 Virtue no more in rural plains,
 Or Innocence or Peace remains ;
 But Vice is in the cottage found,
 And country girls are oft unsound.

F I N I S.

